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Eight-page Nextel Cup preview

In Timeout magazine
2004 Nextel Cup champion Kurt Busch



Sasebo, Atsugi win environmental quality awards

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Day 1 of Far East H.S. wrestling tournament

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Volume 63, No. 306 © SS 2005 J

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2005

Printed in the U.S.A. by the U.S. Navy, 1000 10th St., Suite 100, San Francisco, CA 94133-5000. Phone: (415) 776-0000. Fax: (415) 776-0001. E-mail: ss@navy.mil. Web: www.navy.mil. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission from the U.S. Navy.

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Navy expands re-up bonuses

Seven more ratings eligible for up to
\$45,000 payout for six-year commitment

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Caring for the wounded

■ Learning to live as
a triple amputee Page 4

■ Some injured
GIs get caught in
red tape Page 4

■ Army program gets
hurt soldiers help
close to home Page 4

Sgt. Joey Bozok, shown with wife Jayme, lost parts of his legs and right arm when his Humvee rolled over a bomb in Iraq. But Bozok says he has never been happier since he got married in December.

ETHAN HYMAN/The Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Togo's leadership questioned:

Togo's new military-installed president flew to Nigeria on Thursday for talks with President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is leading regional efforts to reverse the Togolese leader's army-backed succession to power. Faure Gnassingbe was immediately ushered into closed-door talks with Obasanjo upon his arrival.

Togo's military announced Gnassingbe's appointment to the presidency on Feb. 5, hours after his father — 38-year Togo ruler Gnassingbe Eyadema — died.

Pakistan PM attack: Pakistani police said Thursday they are holding a suspected Islamic militant in connection with last year's failed suicide attack against the country's prime minister.

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz survived the attack when a suicide bomber blew himself up near his car on July 30 in Fatch Jang, near the capital. On Thursday, Zafar Iqbal, police chief in Attock, said that they are holding a man named Salman, but would not elaborate.

Nepal political crisis: King Gyanendra on Thursday announced the formation of an anti-graft commission that will be given broad powers to investigate and jail corrupt politicians and government bureaucrats under Nepal's sweeping state of emergency.

Amnesty International, meanwhile, warned Thursday that the king's moves were destroying human rights and taking the country to the "brink of disaster" — a charge the government denies.

The group's secretary general, Irene Khan, called on donor nations to suspend military aid to Nepal's government to pressure it to change its policies.

Tsunami recovery: A powerful earthquake sent tsunami survivors fleeing from buildings in Indonesia's hard-hit Aceh province Thursday, while Australia said its helicopters will soon return home as the focus of relief efforts shifts from emergency aid to rebuilding. Thursday's quake was the latest in a series of aftershocks in the region. There were no immediate reports of injury or damage.

Alleged terror chief trial: Alleged terror chief Abu Bakar Bashir told a court in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Thursday he was being framed by President Bush for supporting Islam and that he had nothing to do with a string of deadly bombings in Indonesia.

Bashir, the alleged leader of the al-Qaida-linked terror group Jamaah Islamiyah, is charged with inspiring his followers to carry out the Bali and J.W. Marriott



BENNIE J. DAVIS III/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Flag for a friend: Senior Airman Christopher W. Turner, top left; Airman 1st Class Isaac Garcia, top right; Senior Airman Tyler J. Trease, bottom left; and Airman 1st Class Nicholas Braun, all firefighters of the 36 Civil Engineering Squadron, 36 Air Expeditionary Wing, hold the American flag Wednesday at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, during a moment of silence honoring the death of Air Force firefighter Staff Sgt. Ray Rangel. Rangel, 29, died Sunday while attempting to rescue two soldiers trapped in a Humvee that overturned in a canal in Iraq.

hotel bombings. Prosecutors have asked a court to sentence him to eight years in jail.

States

Jackson hospitalized: Michael Jackson was recovering from flu symptoms and was in good spirits after a short hospital stay that prompted another delay in his child molestation trial, a doctor said.

The pop star returned to his Neverland ranch in California on Wednesday after spending a night at the hospital, according to Jackson spokeswoman Raymone K. Bain.

Elizabeth Smart kidnapping: The drifter and self-proclaimed prophet accused of kidnapping Elizabeth Smart in Utah was removed from his competency hearing twice for singing a religious song — the third time he has done that in court in recent months.

Brian David Mitchell, 51, and his wife, Wanda Barrese, 59, are charged with kidnapping, sexual assault and burglary.

Judge Judith Atherton allowed the competency hearing to continue without Mitchell.

Florida election laws: The Florida secretary of state's office Wednesday proposed changing election law to give voters more privacy at polling sites — and give those who cast provisional ballots a week, instead of two days, to prove their eligibility.

The measures would also establish the secretary — the current officeholder is Republican Glenda Hood — as the ultimate referee when disputes arise from different interpretations of election law for county supervisors.

Right-to-life case: Family and supporters of a severely brain-damaged Florida woman at the center of a right-to-die case kicked off a protest and lobbying campaign to block removal of a feeding tube that helps keep the woman alive.

With legal options dwindling, the parents of Terri Schiavo, Bob and Mary Schindler, have turned to anti-abortion group Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry; he said he would again lobby Gov. Jeb Bush to intervene.

War on terrorism

Gitmo prisoner torture claim: An Australian terror suspect freed from Guantanamo Bay last month was probably tortured during his detention, a leading psychiatrist said Wednesday after examining him.

Egyptian-born Mamdouh Habib was released without charge from the U.S. military base in Cuba last month more than three years after his arrest in Pakistan in 2001. Habib claimed he was sent to Egypt, where he was tortured daily for six months before arriving at Guantanamo Bay in 2002.

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Navy adds to bonus re-enlistment jobs

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy added seven ratings to its extensive list of jobs for which sailors can collect the Selective Re-enlistment Bonus if they commit to stay Navy.

Added to the list of 70 ratings are quartermaster, cryptographic technician technical, engine, damage controlman, hull technician and some aviation boatswain's mate ratings. Some of the bonuses are tied to how long the sailor has been in the Navy.

Eligibility in the newly added ratings was effective Feb. 1.

While the maximum payout for the added ratings is a \$45,000 bonus for a six-year commitment, not all sailors who re-enlist will qualify for the top payout, said Lt. Kyle Raines, Navy Personnel Command spokesman.

"Two [cryptologists] might get slightly different bonuses based on when they came in, what their current pay is, and the

multiple for that rating," Raines said, referring to a figure assigned to each rating and zone that personnel officials use to calculate bonus payouts.

The complete list of eligible ratings and the "multiple" by which officials calculate payouts is posted on the Navy Web site at www.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/NAVADMI

Ns/Message Details/020, 05.htm.

Re-enlistment bonuses provide incen-

Additions to bonus program

The Navy has added seven ratings to its Selective Re-enlistment Bonus program. Some of the bonuses are tied to the amount of time sailors are in the Navy.

Zone A are sailors with less than six years of service; zone B between six and 10 years of service; zone C from 10 to 14 years of service.

The re-enlistment:
Quartermasters in zones A, B and C
Cryptographic technician technical, zones B and C
Aviation boatswain's mate fuel, zone A
Aviation boatswain's mate handling, zone A
Engine, zone A
Damage controlman, zone A
Hull technicians, zone A

skills and experience, and motivates others to get training and be an asset to the Navy as well," said Davis, a sailor for nearly six years.

tive for sailors, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Heidi Davis, 32, a cryptologist assigned to the USS La Salle, the former flagship of the Navy's 6th Fleet.

The bonuses make the targeted work forces stronger by letting "the Navy hang on to people with the

On the flip side, the Navy has eliminated some jobs that once qualified for the SRB and decreased the bonus payout levels for 31 others, Raines said.

The decreases go into effect March 3, so sailors eligible to re-enlist will want to do so now before the payouts decrease next month, he said.

"The SRB program is another example of our Human Capital Strategy's aim to ensure we have the right sailors, with the right skills, in the right jobs and this program helps us achieve that goal," the chief of naval personnel, Vice Adm. Gerry Howeing, said in a statement.

"It is a flexible incentive for the Navy to encourage retention in ratings where skilled sailors are needed and in turn provides those sailors with greater financial compensation."

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@mail.estripes.osd.mil

New program gives some sailors early-out option

BY JON R. ANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy has approved a new early-out option for many sailors due to get out of the service before Oct. 1.

The "Early Transition Program" allows certain sailors to leave the Navy, but they must go by Aug. 15, said Master Chief Petty Officer Doug DeVault, an enlisted manpower manager for Navy's chief of personnel.

Sailors whose active contract ends before Oct. 1, the start of the military's new fiscal year, are eligible to apply, said DeVault. It could shave as much as six

months off of contracts for those who apply now.

The program expands an existing policy that allows sailors to leave the Navy, with their commander's permission, as much as 90 days early.

Traditionally, early-out requests must be linked to set of approved reasons, such as plans to go to college. That's not so with the new policy. Sailors don't need a reason, but their boss still has to give the OK.

Unit commanders will still be able to disapprove requests, he said, but even if the commander approves, final approval rests with Navy headquarters.

Sailors in a few specialties, however, are not eligible, DeVault said. Excluded are:

- Specialties with Selective Re-enlistment Bonus. "If a sailor is SRB eligible or currently drawing an SRB, we're not letting them go. That's a critical skill and we need those people to stick around," DeVault said.

- Special Operations. SEALs, Explosive Ordnance Disposal experts, Special Surface Warfare Combatant Crewman and divers are not eligible.

- No Nukes. Anyone with a rating in nuclear propulsion systems is not eligible.

- Stop-loss ratings. While the

Navy currently has no specialties affected by stop loss, officials "throw this in as a catch-all, in case we do have another stop loss," DeVault said.

Commanders who sign off on requests likely won't see that sailors' replacement quickly.

"The CO has to agree to gap the billet up until the sailors projected rotation date or their [end of active service obligation date]," DeVault said.

The new policy follows a similar extended transition program offered last year that saw some 1,250 sailors get out a few months early. Because last year's offering included sailors with end-of-ser-

vices dates that went into this year, many that might have been interested have already signed up, he said.

Officials estimate about 500 sailors will take advantage of the new program. "But that's by no means a quota," he added.

The early out offering also comes as the Navy is preparing to cut its force levels by 13,000 sailors next year. Officials hope it will help start whittling down those numbers now.

"As we get smaller, the jobs go away. If the member is in an excess billet out there, there's really no sense in him sticking around," DeVault said.

E-mail Jon R. Anderson at: anderson@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Hagee: Cultural training needed to handle globally funded insurgents

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. servicemembers in Iraq need more training — especially cultural training — to deal with a globally funded and highly sophisticated insurgency, the Marine Corps commandant told lawmakers Thursday.

The comments came as Navy and Marine officials outlined to Congress their 2006 budget requests, which includes more funding for troops' training and additional doubts bonuses for individuals with language skills. Those start at \$100 a month for active duty personnel.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael Hagee said little has changed in the combat tactics and physical demands of fighting insurgents over the years. But to more effectively anticipate their movements and plans, a new emphasis must be placed on understanding their motives and background.

"The [insurgents] today are globalized. They are able to coordinate worldwide, able to communicate worldwide and raise money worldwide," he said. "That's signif-

cantly different than in the interwar period between World War I and World War II."

Over the last five years, the Army and Navy have placed a greater emphasis on education, both before and after troops enter the service.

Hagee said about 97 percent of Marines are high school graduates, and new efforts are under way to provide them with more continuing education opportunities, both at home and while deployed.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark reiterated plans to recruit higher-educated sailors because of the ever increasing complexity of the Navy's systems.

"I've told our people we're not competing against the Marines or the Army or the Air Force for people. We're actually competing against Fortune 500 companies that want the same kind of people we want," he said. "We've told our people, 'If you're going to get promoted, you're going to have to have degrees.'"

Gordon England, secretary of the Navy, admitted the service "probably started too late" in emphasizing the importance of education in its servicemembers, but he is pleased with recent efforts to change that attitude.

The Navy's proposed \$125.6 billion budget up \$6.4 billion from last year, also includes proposals to reduce the carrier fleet from 12 to 11 ships and reduce submarine production next year from two to one.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

USS Kitty Hawk all tied up



BO J. FLANNAGAN/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Deck department personnel help maintain tension on a salt-and-pepper line between USS Kitty Hawk and USNS John Ericsson during a replenishment at sea on Wednesday. The salt-and-pepper line lets the commanding officers of both ships have bridge-to-bridge communications during a replenishment.

The good — and bad — in GI aftercare

Red tape traps some veterans

BY WES SMITH

The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel



Soldiers gather Thursday in the processing center of the new Army medical facility on the Air National Guard Base in Birmingham, Ala. The military is seeing benefits to treating injured troops near their homes.

Community-based health care plan a hit

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Sgt. Chris Dunbar was nursing a shattered jaw after fighting in Iraq. Upon arriving at Fort Stewart, Ga., he realized he would be stuck at the base for more than a year until his teeth and mouth fully healed.

What he wished was to go home to recover. The Army agreed.

Through the military's new community-based health care initiative, Dunbar was allowed to return home to Tampa, Fla., where he is being treated by an Air Force doctor and has family help while remaining on active duty.

"This is really a godsend," Dunbar said in a telephone interview.

The program in Florida is one of five established since January 2004 to serve injured National Guard and Reserve soldiers in 23 states. This month, a center opened in Birmingham, Ala., to evaluate the health-care needs of soldiers in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky.

"The purpose is to allow soldiers to come back to their communities and receive medical care instead of at a military installation," said Alabama Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Bob Horton.

Each center has case workers who evaluate the soldiers' eligibility to return home and a nurse to monitor their progress.

The indefinite nature of the fighting in Iraq, mounting injuries and multiple returns to combat by Guard and Reserve troops forced the Army to re-evaluate its health-care policy, said Lt. Col. Ken Braddock, who oversees the community-based health care programs for most of the eastern states.

"Initially, that's why the Army looked at a community-based option — to augment the medical capability," said program manager Col. Barbara Scherb, who estimated the administrative costs of the program would reach \$23 million this year. But now the Army is seeing benefits for the treatment of soldiers, as well.

Allowing troops to be treated near home can "get them to heal quicker," Braddock said.

To be eligible for the program, soldiers must remain on active duty. While they are treated near home, they also take on a military job so they get out and adjust to living in a civilian environment. Once soldiers have recovered from their injuries, they are released from active duty until their next scheduled mobilization.

HINESVILLE, Ga. — Staff Sgt. Howard LeRoy Hizer made it back from Iraq with a Bronze Star in November 2003, but he's still fighting to get healthy and get home.

More than a year after the rest of his Florida National Guard unit returned to civilian life, the St. Cloud, Fla., reservist has a drawer full of medications, a Jeep with 265,000 miles on it and a bed in a 16-man trailer on a military base 300 miles from his family.

Hizer, 41, was called to active duty in December 2002 and served 11 months as an infantry-squad leader in the Persian Gulf before being sent to Fort Stewart, Ga., because of severe back and neck injuries.

He was hurt when he fell from a truck on its way to help a military-police unit that had been attacked.

The staff sergeant, an Osceola County volunteer firefighter who works at St. Cloud's wastewater-treatment plant in civilian life, is now into his second year of what the military calls "medical hold-over." He gets his military pay and free treatment for his injuries, but except for the time he spends on leave, he can't return to his wife and two young children.

"He's very frustrated, and I'm beyond frustration," said his wife, Lynette Hizer, a registered nurse.

Col. Barbara Scherb of U.S. Army Forces Command in Atlanta acknowledged last week that at least 15 wounded or injured Iraq veterans who were among the first to arrive at Fort Stewart have been blocked from seeking treat-

ment at home, even though other soldiers in similar circumstances have been allowed to do so.

The bureaucratic knot, which the colonel described as "very complex budgetary and statutory problem all wrapped up in legalities" should be untied by the end of February, the colonel said.

The military spent millions to increase medical staff and to improve living conditions at Fort Stewart and other bases after injured Reserve and National Guard troops returning from Iraq complained to members of Congress about unequal and poor treatment in fall 2002.

Last spring, the Army also unveiled a \$23 million community-based health care organization to relieve overburdened bases by allowing soldiers such as Hizer to get medical treatment near their homes.

Hizer has petitioned repeatedly to get into the community-care program, but so far his requests have been denied.

"I just want to get fixed so I can go home and pursue my job," he said. "It's almost like they want to wait until you just say you want to quit and go home."

Currently, 1,455 active-duty Guard and Reserve are in the community-care program.

Former National Guard 1st Lt. Ted Pratchios, 33, of Jacksonville was Hizer's platoon leader in Iraq. Pratchios recalled that he recommended Hizer for the Bronze Star based on his coolheaded leadership of his nine-man squad.

"I can't believe he is still at Fort Stewart. It's like you are being punished for being hurt," Pratchios said. "Certainly there is something not working the way it should be there."

'I've never been happier in my whole life'

With bride at his side, triple amputee adjusts to life after war

BY VALERIE BAUERLEIN
Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer

WASHINGTON — Joey Bozick crosses his one arm over his body, rifles his backpack for his pillbox. He flips the compartment with his thumb, throws back his head and pops the morphine pill into his mouth.

His wife, Jayme, does not reach to help him.

She stands behind his wheelchair, ruffling his buzz cut. The silver ring on her left hand, gleaming like a chrome bumper, is identical to the one on his left.

They are in their temporary home, a room on the grounds of Walter Reed Army Medical Center. They are smiling.

"I'll tell you this much," said Bozick of the Iraq war's three triple amputees. "I've never been happier in my whole life."

Bozick, 26, shipped out last March to Iraq. He was in the desert, in a tent with nine guys, the military police officers he led.

On Oct. 27, he was riding through the desert south of Bagh-

dad when his Humvee rolled over a bomb. His buddies were OK. But Joey lost his right leg above the knee. His left leg, at the knee. His right arm, at the elbow.

They sent him to Germany, to the hospital. Then they sent him home. He woke up in the amputee ward in Walter Reed, in Washington. His girlfriend Jayme, 25, was there.

He hurt where his arm and legs used to be. His foot hurt so badly he thought it was broken. He doesn't remember it, but Jayme does. She stayed most nights in the hospital room.

He could not feed himself, go to the bathroom, turn a page.

Family came. Friends. His mother, Gall, packed three outfits and stayed three months. Jayme cared for him as he became a child all over again, learning to crawl, to sit, to eat.

One day, he sent them all out, but Jayme.

He wanted her to understand that there were things he would never be able to do. Run on the beach. Carry her. Dance.

He said he did not want her to stay because she felt sorry for him. He told her she was free to go, that he loved her and he always would. She said, as long as you have your head and your heart, that's all I need.

They married on New Year's Eve in the hospital chapel.

People donated a cake, a limo, a suite at the Four Seasons Hotel with couches and champagne and a bathroom made of marble.

She has a job now, an internship as an exercise physiologist at the National Naval Medical Center in nearby Bethesda, Md. It is her last requirement for graduation from Texas A&M University.

He has a job, too, of sorts. Physical therapy, to build his strength and prepare for prosthetic legs. Occupational therapy, to learn to use a wheelchair, to cook one-handed, to write.

Bozick said he's lucky to have gotten injured after his wild days were spent. He sees 18- or 19-year-old amputees in rehab, in the dining hall. They have not had the life he had.

They do not have the girl he has.



ETHAN HYMAN/The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer

Sgt. Joey Bozick and his wife Jayme were married New Year's Eve, two months after Bozick lost both legs and an arm in an explosion in Iraq. Even as a triple amputee, Bozick says he has never been happier, because he has married the woman he loves.

Sasebo, Atsugi get nods in environmental competition

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Environmental programs and projects at Sasebo Naval Base and Naval Air Facility Atsugi are garnering national attention.

Air quality improvements and water conservation were among initiatives that helped the two Japan bases win two of the three overseas environmental quality awards in the 2004 Chief of Naval Operations environmental competition, the Navy announced this week.

Across the Navy, 28 winners were selected for various awards in the competition, which is sponsored by CNO Environmental Readiness Division.

Sasebo and Atsugi will compete in the overseas division against Naval Support Activity Bahrain for a Secretary of Navy environmental award, said Thomas Blackmer, regional environmental program director for Commander Naval Forces Japan. The winner in that category wins with other services for Defense Department honors.

Sasebo's accomplishments, ac-

cording to a CNFJ news release, included increased air emissions tests, improved water management and increased efforts to prevent pollution and reduce waste. The base also is developing an environmental management system, which Blackmer said helps an installation become a better environmental steward.

"It organizes all your environmental programs under a process that you can document," he said, "so if somebody leaves, somebody comes in, the system is in place; you can see what the environmental concerns are, what the environmental projects are. It's just to improve the process, to make it more effective, from the top to the bottom."

Recent environmental achievements at Atsugi included installing waste-water recycling systems to conserve almost 400,000 gallons of water annually. Atsugi's environmental teams also reduced hazardous-waste generation, according to the CNFJ news release.

Blackmer described Atsugi's wastewater recycling system as closed-loop recycling wash racks,

installed in the ground on the flight line, at the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department facility and at the Navy aviation depot, Naval Air Pacific Repair Activity.

"Normally, when you spray off your car, water goes anywhere," Blackmer said, using one example. "This water is recaptured; it goes through a filter and is reused ... so it saves a tremendous amount of water."

CNFJ officials said residents of both bases also took part with nearby Japanese communities in Earth Day activities, including cleaning up local roadways and waterways and planting trees.

"We feel good that Sasebo and Atsugi have been able to win these awards this year, and we're looking to continue in environmental stewardship and environmental compliance by improving processes and winning more awards in the future," Blackmer said Thursday.

The winners will receive their awards May 3 at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center in Washington, D.C.

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at: svan@stripes.com

SCA goes medieval at Camp Zama



Above: Jack Graham (also known as Frier Jack), left, assistant principal at Yokosuka Middle School, defends against Jay Noyes (aka Noe) in armored melee combat at Camp Zama, Japan, on Feb. 12. The Society for Creative Anachronism's Avalon group met at Camp Zama to practice medieval armored combat. The group acts on their interest in the Middle Ages by wearing period clothing and recreating the era's martial arts. Left: Petty Officer 3rd Class Mary Loung (front) from Strike Fighter Squadron 27 from Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan, defends herself against a strike from Jay Noyes.

PHOTOS BY JIM SCHULZ
Stars and Stripes

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Dr. C.L. Callahan, Pastor	john316@iea.at.na.jp

Tsunami aid concert

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Yokota Cares Committee is sponsoring a March 1 benefit concert to raise money for the American Red Cross Tsunami Disaster Fund.

At the family-friendly event, to begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Officers Club, local professional musicians will play "Broadway and American popular music," according to a news release.

Tickets can be purchased from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 26 and from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 27 at the Sophie Chien Antique Furniture Sale at the Yupo Community Center.

Call Lee Andersen at DSN 225-3438 for more information and to buy tickets.

Youth center closure

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Yokota's East Youth Center will be closed Feb. 25-May 1 for renovations.

The following is a list of alternate locations for classes and events:

- Dance classes are to be moved to the West Youth Center.
- Piano classes are to be moved to the East Chapel.
- Gymnastics are canceled for March; they will resume in April at the West Youth Center.
- Youth sports basketball

games are to be played at the West Youth Center.

■ School Age Care Program and piano lesson payments can be made at the Kibo Child Development Center; dance/gymnastics class payments can be made at the West Youth Center.

A shuttle bus for youth program members will run between the East and West Youth Centers from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Scholarship available

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Yokota Officers' Spouses' Club is seeking college scholarship applicants.

Yokota High School seniors and spouses who are continuing their education can find eligibility requirements and application forms at www.yosc.org.

The application deadline is noon March 18.

Call Elizabeth Downs at DSN 227-3170 or e-mail ishetkijma@hotmail.com for more information.

Sesame Place passes

Yokota Air Base residents can grab free passes to visit Tokyo Sesame Place on Feb. 26 and 27.

Passes allow one-day entry for three people to the 13th Annual Working Vehicle Show, to the park itself and, for children younger than 12, the new Mutsugoro Animal Kingdom petting zoo. Entry to the zoo for all others is 700 yen (about \$6.65).

Pick up passes while supplies last from the Family Childcare Office, the youth centers, child development centers and the Yupo Recreation Center.

From staff reports

Yokota Baptist Church

Pastor Warren Webster

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Worship Service	10:45 am		
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Youth Altar Service			
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Body Grounds Cafe (2nd & 4th Sunday)	6:00 pm		

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At Fussa Gate: Left on 16 to light. Turn right. Take next left. Church on left.

Commission certifies results of Iraq election

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi people have elected a new democratic parliament, the first in 50 years, but a new government is unlikely to take over for weeks, officials said Thursday.

Iraq's electoral commission certified the results of the country's Jan. 30 elections on Thursday, and Shiite political parties hold the majority of seats, as expected.

But wrangling over who will become prime minister may take days or even weeks to resolve, several people close to the talks said.

The clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance won 140 seats, giving it a slight majority in the 275-member parliament. But a two-thirds majority — or 182 seats — is needed to confirm the next president, two vice presidents, the prime minister and his cabinet.

Alli Hashim al-Youshaa, one of the alliance's leaders, said the coalition has recruited eight lawmakers from other political parties to join their block in parliament, and that talks were underway to recruit many more to reach the two-thirds majority needed.

There is no timetable for convening the new National Assembly and the current government will work with the incoming law-

makers to set a date to convene. But even once the assembly meets, there is no deadline for appointing a largely ceremonial president and two vice presidents, who will in turn appoint the prime minister.

Most observers don't expect the assembly to appoint the president until there is consensus on who will be prime minister and who will be in the cabinet, because once the president is appointed, a prime minister must be named within two weeks.

The two leading candidates to be the alliance's nominee are interim Vice President Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmad Chalabi. But current Prime Minister Ayad Alawi, whose secular party won 40 seats, insists he is still in the running as a compromise candidate.

Al-Jaafari said Thursday he expects the alliance to agree on a nominee within the next two days, but it wasn't clear if he expected the candidate to have the backing of the 182 lawmakers needed to win, or only the support of the alliance.

"We are having free discussions about who is going to be the prime minister and it probably will take two or three days to announce who is going to be the prime minister," al-Jaafari said following the certification of the election results.

Left gear leaves units short

Guard, Reserve troops face long wait for equipment

BY JON R. ANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Reserve and National Guard units that leave equipment behind in Iraq and Afghanistan will have to wait more than a year before they get replacement gear, according to the civilian chief of the Reserve components.

Cash to buy the gear is earmarked in the Pentagon's budget request for next year, as well as the supplemental request for this year's war spending, said Tom Hall, assistant Defense Secretary for Reserve Affairs, told a gathering of reporters Thursday in Washington.

Both requests are now being debated in Congress.

If approved, that money will allow units commanders "to start resetting ... the equipment left behind," said Hall.

But even if both requests are approved in short order, it will take 12 to 18 months before the new gear shows up, said Hall. And even then, he added, "there are questions about whether that will be enough."

Most Guard and Reserve units serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have been handing off everything to from trucks and Humvees to tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles to follow-on forces.

Hall said the equipment gap between when units return from the war zones and when they are able to begin training again back home is fueling readiness concerns.

"If you leave your equipment in Iraq," said Hall, that means "you don't have equipment ... to train on."

Asked about the issue during testimony on Capitol Hill, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Richard Myers noted the same problem.

"There will be a lag time where units are below the desired levels of readiness," said Myers.

"It also impacts the training of units going forward," added Myers, explaining that in many cases units now downrange had to cobble together equipment from other units now facing their own deployments.

Also, he said, the equipment shuffle complicates Pentagon promises that troops "will train with the equipment they're going to use in country."

Recruiting woes

Meanwhile, said Hall, the majority of the Reserve components are struggling with recruiting efforts.

"The ground truth on where we stand right now, in first four months of the fiscal year, is that only the Marine Corps Reserve has met its recruiting goals," said Hall.

Hall said he expects the Army Guard and Reserve in particular "will continue to have a challenging year."

The Army National Guard is currently at 95 percent of its authorized strength and the Army Reserve has dipped to 97 percent.

When asked about Reserve recruiting, Myers told Congressional leaders Thursday that he was keeping a careful eye on the trends.

"While we ought to be concerned about this, it's not a time to panic at this point," Myers told Senators. "We're going to watch this very closely because the last thing we want to end up with is a hollow force."

To help turn the tide, said Hall, the services have surged an additional 2,300 Guard and Reserve recruits into communities.

Hall said he's backing efforts to offer new enlistment bonuses for as much as \$15,000. "If we can go from \$2,400 to \$15,000 I think that could make a bit of difference," said Hall.

E-mail Jon R. Anderson at: andersonj@mail.strips.com

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Training Iraqi troops slow going for U.S.

Some say effort may take decade

BY TERRY BOYD
Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq — Two years after it disbanded Saddam Hussein's military, the U.S. Army is trying to build a new Iraqi army.

The sooner that fledgling army can take care of itself and protect its country, the sooner U.S. troops can go home, military leaders said.

But don't pack your bags yet. U.S. trainers say American soldiers could be in Iraq for the next decade, a sobering assessment of a fragmented, though rapidly evolving, effort.

"It's a five-to-10-year solution," said 1st Sgt. J.T. Brown. Until last month, Brown was the commander of a trainer at The Island — technically the 4th Iraqi Army Division Training Academy — a training facility near Tikrit.

It will be years before the new army will have the skills or the leadership to lift the security burden off U.S. troops, trainers said. But the situation is improving.

The Iraqi soldiers who graduated from The Island last month were some of the best U.S. trainers have seen, said Brown and Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Taylor, who also worked as a trainer.

Training at The Island includes basic soldiering skills, such as marksmanship, weapons care and maintenance. Marksmanship is a large portion, said Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, 1st Infantry Division commanding general in an interview Sunday.

"We've established marksmanship standards [for recruits]... and we've gotten millions and millions of rounds of ammunition," Batiste said. Recruits are learning "to fire three aimed rounds versus 300 sprayed over the top of a wall, which is what they were doing," Batiste said.

Some combat techniques, such as how to lay down suppressing fire or cover fire, are also taught.

But unlike at U.S. Army boot camp, U.S. trainers at The Island devote much of their time trying to undo ethnic and religious tensions, the residue of Saddam's corrupt, divide-and-rule culture.

Trainers throw together Sunnis, Shites and Kurds, and it takes recruits time to get comfortable with one another.

"We have the periodic nosebleed, but by the end of the week, they're hugging each other... after working as a team," Brown said.

In addition, trainers try to teach things such as rules of engagements, civil rights, laws of war and ethics.

The Island is one of perhaps a dozen training operations across Iraq, but programs are not standardized.

"Everyone is teaching different things," said Maj. Donald McFarland, with the 42nd Infantry Division.

Recruits — many uneducated



men from rural areas — often are told training would last two weeks instead of four, and that they can go home in the afternoons, Brown said.

Trainers worry soldiers motivated by money, not pride in the country, "may not give 100 percent effort in training which ... may cost them their lives in combat," Brown added.

Plus, the recruits who do turn into "super, squared-away soldiers" end up in Iraqi units with no real non-commissioned officer corps and no chain of command — an environment that sometimes punishes rather than encourages initiative, Brown said.

Despite all the start-up glitches, the trainers agree they're seeing steady progress.

There are plans for advanced NCO training comparable to Primary Leadership Development Course. But there is nothing similar to large-scale field exercises such as the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Much is left up to American units who coach and mentor the Iraqi soldiers as they integrate into units fighting alongside U.S. troops.

With limited time resources and training infrastructure, trainers at The Island have to settle for producing "the best soldiers we can," Brown said. That's not merely the new policy mandate out of Washington, trainers say.

"That's the only hope for the future of this country," Brown said. "The future of Iraq is right here."

E-mail Terry Boyd at: boyd@mail.strips.osd.mil

Finding stability, good leadership

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq — First they were the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. They didn't fight. Then they were the Iraqi National Guard. They didn't fight.

U.S. officials are now hoping the third time is the charm, with the goal of Iraqis taking the lead on security — and American troops in the background — as the focus turns to standardizing training across the country.

Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, former 101st Airborne Division commander, is NATO Training Mission Iraq commander, in charge of standardizing training and establishing advanced training institutions, including an Iraqi War College.

Recent developments include: ■ On Jan. 6, the traditional Iraqi Army Day, U.S. officials stood up nine divisions across central and northern Iraq, from Tikrit to Kirkuk to Sulimaniyah. Under the Iraqi army structure, a full division is about 15,600 men, and a battalion is 896 soldiers, similar to the U.S. Army, said Maj. Steve Maranian, Iraqi Security Forces coordinator for the Würzburg, Germany-based 1st Infantry Division.

■ As of January, there were about 56,000 Iraqis in military forces organized into 90 battalions across Iraq, according to Department of Defense documents.

■ In the 1st ID's area of responsibility, the number of battalions increased to 20 from eight or 10 when the division arrived a year ago, Maranian said.

■ At a facility near Tikrit, between 300 and 350 Iraqi soldiers graduate every 28 days, or about three battalions in a year. Smaller training centers in Iraq and Jordan graduate from 50 to 100 soldiers a month, U.S. officials say.

Materially, the situation has improved over the past few months. Iraqi soldiers are getting body armor, weapons, communications equipment and trucks, said Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, 1st ID commander. Iraqi soldiers say — and Batiste agreed — that communications equipment is essential for the new army.

Above left: An Iraqi recruit wraps himself in the new colors of the 4th Iraqi Division last month during a graduation ceremony at Forward Operating Base Danger.

Above right: Graduating Iraqi troops showed a lot of energy but not much polish during the ceremony. It remains to be seen, say American officers and trainers, if Iraqis can transform themselves into an effective fighting force.

Left: A recruit from the 203rd Iraqi National Guard Battalion practices his marksmanship drills at a base near Ad Dulaiyah, Iraq, under the guidance of instructors from the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: PHOTOS BY TERRY BOYD/Stars and Stripes
LEFT: STEVE LEWIS/Stars and Stripes



Finding dependable leadership is the most difficult part of building the new Iraqi army, says Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, right, Commander of the new 4th Iraqi Division Lt. Gen. Abdul Rahman Azziz al-Mufti, shaking hands with Batiste on Jan. 26, is an example of the best of the emerging leadership, Batiste said.

"Do they need more? Absolutely," Batiste said in an interview Sunday, just before the 1st ID transferred its sector to the New York-based 42nd Infantry Division.

American commanders have replaced unsatisfactory officers and some soldiers, "but that's the exception, not the rule," Maranian said.

Lt. Gen. Abdul Rahman Azziz al-Mufti, commander of the new 4th Iraqi Division based in Tikrit, is an example of the best of the emerging Iraqi military leadership, Batiste said.

"He seems to be a hell of a guy," Batiste added.

That force must now prove itself to the Iraqi people, who have more confidence in American forces.

But, Batiste contends, "the Iraqi army has always been — and is still — the most respected institution in Iraq."

— Terry Boyd

IN THE WORLD

Iran calls for alliance against U.S., Israel

BY NASSER KARIMI

The Associated Press

TEHRAN — Iran — on Thursday urged regional countries to create a powerful alliance and remain vigilant in the face of "U.S. and Israeli plots," a call coming a day after Syria and Iran declared they would form a united front in the face of any threats.

The United States has recently escalated its criticism of both Syria and Iran, demanding that Syria withdraw its troops from Lebanon and accusing Tehran of running a covert nuclear weapons program.

The United States has also said both countries need to do more to prevent insurgents from traveling to Iraq from their territory.

On Thursday, President Bush said that Syria is "out of step" with other nations in the Middle East and said the United States will work with other countries to

Myers: New conflict would strain military

Stars and Stripes

Stretched thin in Iraq, the U.S. military would have trouble responding as quickly and effectively as commanders would like if it had to go to war in Iran or North Korea, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told Congress on Wednesday, according to USA Today.

Air Force Gen. Richard Myers said a sudden military crisis in one of those two nations — both of which are resisting U.S. demands that they give up nuclear programs — would likely force the Pentagon to remobilize Reserve and Guard components that have rotated home from Iraq to rest, USA Today reported in its Thursday editions.

In addition, because of the current strain on U.S. forces, it would take longer for U.S. troops to respond to a crisis in Iran, North Korea or some

other major conflict than U.S. battle plans call for, Myers told the House Armed Services Committee.

"The timeliness of our response might not be to totally consistent with what the combatant commander wants and so forth," the paper reported Myers as saying.

Myers and other senior military officials have acknowledged that U.S. forces are stretched by deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have never been acknowledged in public, however, that that could result in having to compromise plans for another war.

Under Defense Department doctrine, the military must be able to simultaneously fight and swiftly defeat two enemies in two different parts of the world. One of those conflicts can be an enduring one, such as Iraq.

"We can still do that," Myers insisted.

pressure Damascus to remove its troops from Lebanon.

Iran's powerful former President Hashemi Rafsanjani, speak-

ing after meeting Syrian Prime Minister Mohammad Najji Al-Otari, said strengthening relations between Iran, Syria, Iraq,

Lebanon and other Islamic states in the region was of great importance, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

Five killed in Thailand bomb blast

BY SUTIN WANNABOVORN

The Associated Press

BANGKOK, Thailand — A powerful car bomb near a tourist hotel killed five people and wounded more than 40 in insurgent-erected southern Thailand late Thursday, police said, as the prime minister threatened to "lay siege" on villages that support Muslim separatists.

"This is the biggest bombing ever to occur in this region," said Narathiwat province's Gov. Pracha Tehtat, adding it was also Thailand's first car bombing.

The attack took place near the Marina Hotel in Sungai Kokok, a town in Narathiwat along Malaysia's border.

Police Lt. Col. Wei Suwannaraj said the bomb, which was planted inside a car, was likely triggered by mobile phone. Five people died in the blast, and more than 40 were injured, police said.

"This is a car bomb like in Iraq, which shows that the border behind this attack is not ordinary," Pracha said.

However, when asked if foreign Islamic militants may have been involved, the acting army commander for the area, Maj. Gen. Khwanthart Klahan, said: "It is still unclear. It is like other similar attempts to cause disturbances in the south."



A Thai policeman inspects a damaged car after a bomb exploded in Yala province on Wednesday. At least five people were killed and more than 40 wounded from the blast in southern Thailand.

More than 650 people died in attacks last year in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat — violence the government blames on a Muslim insurgency. Earlier Thursday, gunmen killed a Buddhist villager in Narathiwat's Ruesor district.

The scale and apparent organization of the violence has raised suspicions of foreign terrorist involvement. Thai authorities have acknowledged that the insurgents have had contact with regional terrorist organization Je-

maah Islamiyah, but deny any significant foreign influence in the region.

But the size of Thursday's bomb, estimated to be 110-220 pounds, and the new tactics are likely to raise fears the insurgency is worsening. Previous bombs were smaller and often placed on parked motorcycles.

Sungai Kokok town is popular with male tourists for its nightlife, and Thursday's bombing took place on a street with many open-front bars.

Warning system set up

TOKYO — Japan and the United States will start providing tsunami warnings to countries around the Indian Ocean as early as next month as a stopgap measure until the region establishes its own alert system, a Japanese official said Thursday.

Under the plans, both Japan's Meteorological Agency and the Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center will distribute the alerts after analyzing quakes in the region, said agency official Osamu Kamaiguchi.

4 found dead in Japan

TOKYO — Four people were found dead inside a vehicle in northern Japan on Thursday, in what appeared to be a group suicide pact, police said.

The three men and a woman were found by a construction worker in a rented station wagon parked in a vacant lot in Ebetsu, on the Japanese island of Hokkaido, said Ebetsu police spokesman Shinichi Watanabe.

Police believe the four died from carbon monoxide poisoning, Watanabe said.

Mining still 'a good job'

FUXIN, China — Two days after a gas explosion killed at least 211 people at the Sunjiawan mine in the country's most deadly mining accident in decades, miners in this northeastern city said Tuesday that their biggest worry is making a living.

Rescuers were still searching for six miners left missing by the blast, the government said. But despite the extreme hazards of the job, miners belong to China's industrial elite, earning about \$3,600 a year — 10 times the annual rural average of about \$360. The national average is about \$1,800.

"Everybody has to make a living and this is a good way to make a living," said miner Zhang Jun, 40.

Asked if he'd want his son to work in a mine, too, he said, "Oh sure, it's a good job."

From The Associated Press

Three saved after storm pounds American Samoa

The Associated Press

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa — Rescuers saved three people found floating in open water after Hurricane Olaf slashed the region with winds of 160 mph, and a search for more survivors was planned Thursday.

New Zealand and U.S. planes found the survivors Wednesday during a hunt for boats missing

from a commercial fishing fleet based in the Samoan capital of Apia.

The Category 5 storm moved out to sea after passing within 60 miles of the Manua Islands, where wind and rain caused landslides and downed power lines.

The islands, part of American Samoa, were not hit as hard as forecasters had expected, and no major damage has been reported.

Olaf had gusts of up to 190 mph, and sent waves 30 to 40 feet high onto the shores of Ta'u, Ofu and Olosega, the National Weather Service said. The islands had a few downed power lines, and the main island of Tutuila had two landslides.

As the cleanup began, Gov. Tofigia Talafoano urged the islands' 2,000 residents to help each other however they could.

"We all need each other's support, help and cooperation," he said.

Olaf was expected to head toward the southern Cook Islands, which suffered galling blows from Cyclones Nancy and Meena in the past two weeks.

The last major hurricane to hit American Samoa and Samoa was Heta, which plowed through in January 2004.

Case may point to wide spectrum of bird-flu symptoms

Researchers: Virus undetected until months after Vietnamese boy's death

BY TINI TRAN
The Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — A young Vietnamese boy who died from bird flu last spring suffered from diarrhea before slipping into a coma but did not display the severe respiratory problems typically associated with the deadly virus, according to Oxford University researchers.

The findings, published in Thursday's issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, suggest that avian influenza's symptoms in humans are wider and more varied than originally believed. It also suggests that the total number of infections may have been underestimated.

Bird flu has ravaged the poultry industry in Asia and killed 45 people from Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia since the outbreak surfaced last year. A dozen people have died in Vietnam this year alone.

Dr. Menno de Jong, with Oxford University's Clinical Research Unit at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in Ho Chi Minh City, said he and fellow researchers believe the boy's case, which wasn't linked to bird flu until months later, may mean that

other cases with no respiratory symptoms have gone unnoticed.

"All the surveillance and focus has been on respiratory infections in identifying potential bird flu patients," he said. "This report also shows bird flu can present in a different way. At this point, we don't know whether this is a rare case or not, but we need to know the whole clinical spectrum of avian flu so we know how many cases we really have."

The 4-year-old boy was brought into the hospital in February 2004 with symptoms of fever, vomiting, diarrhea and convulsions before he fell into a fatal coma. His 9-year-old sister had died several days earlier with similar symptoms. The initial diagnosis for both was acute encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain.

Samples were taken from the boy, though not his sister. Months later, researchers examining encephalitis cases discovered the H5N1 virus in the boy's spinal fluid, throat and feces. His death was reclassified as a bird flu case in November.

The boy's case also marked the first time that the virus was found in human feces, a major concern since it suggests a possible route for human-to-human transmission, he said.



A China-bound hovercraft is berthed at a Hong Kong pier Thursday after colliding with a Chinese freight boat in Hong Kong waters, injuring 102. The cause of the accident was still unclear Friday.

Boat wreck in Hong Kong hurts 102

The Associated Press

HONG KONG — A China-bound hovercraft carrying 165 people collided with a Chinese freighter in Hong Kong waters on Thursday, injuring 102 with two in serious condition, the government said.

Ninety-five of the injured were discharged from hospitals, the Hospital Authority said. Two were in serious condition and five were listed as stable.

The cause of the accident was unclear, but Hong Kong was foggy Thursday. Visibility in the area of

the collision was reduced, the Hong Kong Observatory said in a statement.

The two boats collided in waters southwest of the Hong Kong island of Tsing Yi, the government said earlier. The passenger boat, which was carrying 156 passengers and nine crew members, was traveling to China's Nansha Island and the city of Panyu.

In a separate accident, a cruise ship collided with a small boat, sending two of its passengers overboard, the government spokeswoman said. The passengers were rescued and didn't require medical treatment, she said.



The Chubu Centrair International Airport, equipped with a 3,500-meter runway, a wedding hall and a public bath, officially opened in Tokyo on Thursday.

Japan opens international island airport

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan opened its third major international airport on Thursday, a gateway serving the central region near the city of Nagoya.

Chubu Centrair International Airport will initially have 94 daily flights to 24 cities in Japan and 271 weekly flights to 25 international destinations, the airport said.

The airport, built on reclaimed land in Ise Bay, is seen as a welcome rival for Tokyo's Narita International Airport and Kansai International Airport near Osaka, which have been criticized for their high landing fees.

The new airport has a 3,500-meter runway and a wedding hall. It also is the first airport in Japan with a public bath, offering panoramic views of the runway and Ise Bay.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi welcomed the airport's opening, saying it could become a model for public and private-sector cooperation.

"It will be run by the private sector and operate 24 hours. I hope that the airport will come up with unbureaucratic ideas and provide better service. I hope this will help vitalize the economy," he said.

The airport is near the site of the 2005 Aichi World Expo, which runs from March 25 through Sept. 25 and is expected to attract 15 million visitors.

Other regional airports in Japan, including Nagoya Airport, operate limited international flights.

Among U.S. carriers serving Nagoya, Northwest Airlines Corp. moved its four daily flights to the new airport on Thursday. Next month, United Airlines plans to begin daily nonstop flights from San Francisco. American Airlines plans to begin service from Chicago in April. Continental Airlines Inc. began flying from Honolulu to Nagoya in December.

China to push North Korea on talks

BEIJING — China is sending a top communist party official to North Korea this week, the government said Thursday, amid renewed efforts to get Beijing's longtime ally to resume stalled talks on its

nuclear weapons program.

Top negotiators from the United States and South Korea were in Beijing seeking China's help on persuading the isolated North to return to multilateral nuclear talks that were suspended in June.

From The Associated Press

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IN THE STATES

Bush's Europe trip promising

The president's visit to Europe that starts Sunday holds the promise of better relations between the United States and European leaders for the simple pragmatic reason that disgruntled allies know they have to work with him for four more years. Bush is unpopular in Europe for ordering the invasion of Iraq and pursuing what is widely seen as a foreign policy that ignores the views of other countries. Many leaders did not hide their hope that Democratic Sen. John Kerry would win the presidency in November.

Bush extended an olive branch at a news conference Thursday. He said he would reassure Europeans "as we move beyond the differences of the past, that we can work a lot together to achieve big objectives."

Appeal in tobacco case

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department said Wednesday it will appeal a court decision barring it from pursuing \$280 billion from tobacco companies in a civil racketeering lawsuit.

The government said it will ask the full U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to hear the case after a three-judge panel earlier this month said the government could not seek the money.

The 2-1 decision from the appeals court dealt a major blow to the government's attempt to hold cigarette makers accountable for decades of alleged deceit about the dangers of smoking.

The panel decided that the 1970 civil racketeering statute which the government has used to file its case requires "forward-looking remedies, which did not include 'disgorgement,' or the pursuit of \$280 billion the government claims the industry earned through fraudulent activities."

The defendants in the lawsuit are Philip Morris Inc. and Altria, R.J. Reynolds, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Co., British American Tobacco Ltd., Lorillard Tobacco Co., Liggett Group Inc., Council for Tobacco Research-USA and the Tobacco Institute.

Social Security accounts

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan gave President Bush's plans for changing Social Security by using private accounts a modest endorsement Thursday.

These accounts properly constructed and managed will create a sense of increased wealth "on the part of middle and lower income workers, Greenspan said in an appearance before the House Banking Committee.

Greenspan, however, expressed fresh concerns about the costs of a transition and the impact on financial markets.

His worry: whether increased government borrowing — needed to help bring the accounts online — would have the effect of interest rates from mortgage rates for consumers to borrowing costs for everybody.

Circuit City plane crashes

PUEBLO, Colo. — Federal investigators said the pilots of a Circuit City corporate jet were battling poor weather just before the plane crashed a few miles from an airport, killing all eight on board.

Though the cause of the Wednesday morning crash was not known, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Mike Ferguson said the flight crew had been relying on the plane's instruments, which are used when weather doesn't permit visual landings.

Circuit City said four of the victims were employees of the nation's No. 2 consumer electronics chain. The company said it would not release the names of the victims but that none were executives.

The victims were the pilot, co-pilot and six passengers, including the plane's captain. The flight originated in Richmond, Va., home of Circuit City Stores Inc.

From The Associated Press

Negroponte named intelligence director

BY KATHERINE SHRADER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Thursday named John Negroponte, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and currently the administration's top representative in Iraq, to be America's first national intelligence director.

Announcing the move, Bush said that Negroponte understands global intelligence needs because he's had a long career in the foreign service. Bush also said that Negroponte will make decisions on the budgets for the various intelligence agencies.

"John will make sure that those whose duty it is to defend America have the information we need to make the right decisions," the president said.

Bush said Negroponte's office will be outside of the West Wing because it's important that he be apart from the White House.

"Nevertheless, he will have access on a daily basis in that he'll be my primary briefer," Bush said.

Negroponte said if confirmed he plans to

"reform the intelligence community in ways designed to best meet the intelligence needs of the 21st century."

He called the new job "the most challenging assignment I have undertaken in more than 40 years of government service."

Bush named Lt. Gen. Mike Hayden, who has served as director of the National Security Agency since March 1999, as Negroponte's deputy. He is the longest serving director of the secretive code-breaking agency and has pushed for changes, such as asking longtime agency veterans to retire and increasing reliance on technology contractors.

"If we're going to stop the terrorists before they strike," Bush said, "we must ensure that our intelligence agencies work as a single, unified enterprise."

Discussing the authority that Negroponte will have, Bush said that "people who control the money, people who have access to the president generally have a lot of influence. And that's why John Negroponte is going to have a lot of influence. He will set the budgets."

Negroponte, 65, was at the United Nations when he was tapped to take on the delicate

"He will have access [to me] on a daily basis in that he'll be my primary briefer."

President Bush
on the role of national intelligence director

Defrocked priest guilty in abuse case

BY FOSTER KLUG

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A defrocked priest was found guilty Thursday of molesting a former altar boy who shot and wounded him on a city street a decade later.

Jurors found that Maurice Blackwell, 58, who did not testify, molested Dontee Stokes, 29, when Blackwell was pastor of St. Edward, a Roman Catholic church in West Baltimore.

The jury convicted Blackwell of three of four counts, finding he abused Stokes in 1990, 1991 and 1992 but acquitting him of a charge relating to an alleged incident in 1989, when Stokes was 13.

Sentencing was scheduled for April 15. He would face up to 45 years in prison.

After the verdict, Stokes said he felt vindicated.

"Mr. Blackwell was at no point on trial. It was all about me," he said. "The world can see that I'm not a perfect person, but I stand here right and he stands wrong."

Stokes had served home detention on a gun charge related to the shooting. Blackwell declined to comment. Defense attorney Kenneth Ravenell said he felt jurors reached their decision on evidence they should not have heard, referring to detectives' references to "other victims," which the judge ordered stricken from the record.

It's impossible for people to wipe clean what they've already heard," Ravenell said. He said he planned to seek a retrial and if that failed, to appeal that decision.

On Wednesday, the jurors deliberated five hours without reaching a verdict, sending a note to the judge saying they were unable to agree and asking how to proceed.

Judge Stuart Berger read them standardized instructions Thursday morning on the



Defrocked priest Maurice Blackwell, left, is escorted from the Baltimore City Circuit Court on Thursday by his attorney Kenneth Ravenell, right, in Baltimore.

importance of a unanimous verdict. They then deliberated about a half-hour more before reaching their verdicts.

Stokes had made accusations against Blackwell in 1993, but Blackwell denied the allegations and no other alleged victims came forward at the time. Blackwell received psychological treatment and returned to his parish, although he was barred from working with children and young adults.

In May 2002, in the midst of the national scandal involving Catholic priests, Stokes shot Blackwell three times. In the aftermath, Baltimore prosecutors reviewed Stokes' old allegations and charged Blackwell with abuse.

Stokes, who testified he had an "out-of-body experience" at the time of the shooting, was acquitted of attempted murder in December 2002 but was convicted on gun charges. He served 18 months on home detention.



John Negroponte, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, speaks after President Bush named him as the first national intelligence director Thursday.

job of transforming the U.S. presence in Iraq from that of an occupier to that of an adviser. Bush chose him for the job last April and he went to Baghdad hours after the handover of sovereignty to Iraq's interim government. Negroponte has also been ambassador to the Philippines, Mexico and Honduras.

The director of national intelligence will hold a pre-eminent role in U.S. national security affairs and coordinate the work of all 15 U.S. intelligence agencies.

Emancipation Proclamation goes on view

BY CARL HARTMAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declaring the end to slavery goes on public view Friday as part of Black History Month celebrations.

The document will be on display at the National Archives, where visitors regularly see the original Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

The poor quality of the paper and ink on the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation make it vulnerable to light, so it has been only occasionally brought out of storage. It was last seen on Jan. 19, 2004, the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

The proclamation, issued in the midst of the Civil War on Jan. 1, 1863, said: "I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States, and, henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons."

The proclamation, issued in the midst of the Civil War, applied only to areas under the control of the rebel Confederate States of America. So it had no practical effect on any individual. Slave states which had not joined the confederacy, and areas of others occupied by the Northern forces, were exempted.

But it served the military purpose of making trouble for the South. It asked blacks to refrain from violence but encouraged them to seek the protection of Northern armies. It eroded support of the South by European governments avid for southern cotton.

Charges dropped against airline pilot

The Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — A United Airlines pilot who also flew for the National Guard has been cleared of charges that he lied on an application for a security clearance in a case that began when an acquaintance reported that he'd talked about crashing a plane into Wall Street.

Maj. Robert Feneziani, 44, of San Diego, was arrested last

week by FBI agents with the Joint Terrorism Task Force of Western New York and pleaded not guilty to the charge of making false statements on a Defense Department form.

Feneziani's attorney said the government agreed to drop the charge Wednesday after determining Feneziani's application had been accurate.

"What we wish is that they would have investigated before

they arrested him," attorney Mark Mahoney said.

Feneziani was not charged in connection with the alleged threat to Wall Street.

Mahoney said the pilot denied ever making such a statement.

"We cannot fathom the reason or motivation for including this career-stopping allegation in the [lying] charges to begin with, knowing that such a claim would catapult this case, and Maj. Feneziani, into the national spotlight," Mahoney said.

"They never talked to me about anything," Feneziani said.

U.S. Attorney Michael Battle told The Buffalo News the investigation was continuing and the case could be sent to a grand jury. He declined to elaborate.

Feneziani is assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 107th Air Refueling Wing in Niagara Falls.

'Big Apple' no more

NEW YORK — Forget "The Big Apple." New York now wants to be known as "The World's Second Home."

The city has filed an application to trademark the slogan "The World's Second Home," giving the city exclusive rights to use it to promote business and tourism.

The phrase is likely to come up often as New York makes its push to host the 2012 Olympics.

If the application is accepted, the city would have exclusive rights to attach the phrase to a list of more than 200 products and services, according to Thursday's editions of the New York Times.

No pranks allowed

MCCOOK, Neb. — Two high schools turned down offers from MTV to film a re-creation of a class prank in which a group of students parked a car outside the door to the principal's office.

"It's not part of school life that we need to promote," McCook Public High School Principal Jerry Smith said.

Smith told the cable television station the school would not participate in "High School Stories" because the 2003 prank was not part of the district's curriculum or goals for students' education.

After the rejection, Tyler Beck, whose car was used in the prank, wrote the school board urging it approve the filming, saying the MTV visit would be "a great opportunity for exposure for the community of McCook and the McCook Public School System." The board declined.

From The Associated Press

Boxer on TV's 'The Contender' commits suicide

BY DAVID B. CARUSO

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — A promising young boxer who got the break of a lifetime when he was selected by NBC's upcoming reality TV program, "The Contender," committed suicide.

Police said 23-year-old Najai Turpin shot himself in the head at 4 a.m. Monday while sitting with his girlfriend in a parked car outside the West Philadelphia gym where he trained. Investigators were unsure why he took his life.

An NBC spokeswoman said the producers, cast and crew of "The Contender" were shocked and saddened by Turpin's death. The program, scheduled to debut March 7, will go on as planned.

Produced by reality TV mogul Mark Burnett, "The Contender" will follow the lives of 16 boxers competing for a chance at a million-dollar purse.

The episodes involving Turpin had already been taped.

Percy "Buster" Custus, a trainer who had worked with him since Turpin was 12, said the boxer had enjoyed his experiences with the show but seemed troubled in recent weeks. He said Turpin abruptly left a training camp in the Poconos and returned home to Philadelphia, saying he missed his family.

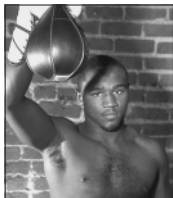
"None of us really know what brought this about," Custus said Tuesday. "You just want to see

the boys come out of the neighborhood. From the time they're young kids, you really want to see them make it. And he was right there."

Turpin had a 13-1 record and had won a city Recreation Department title before he was picked for "The Contender."

"The episode in which he was most depicted will stand as a wonderful testament to who he was. It will not be changed," Burnett wrote in a statement released by NBC.

A tribute to Turpin will be added to the show. Viewers will also be offered a chance to donate money to a trust fund set up to support Turpin's 2-year-old daughter.



Police say Najai Turpin, of NBC's "The Contender," shot and killed himself Monday outside a gym.

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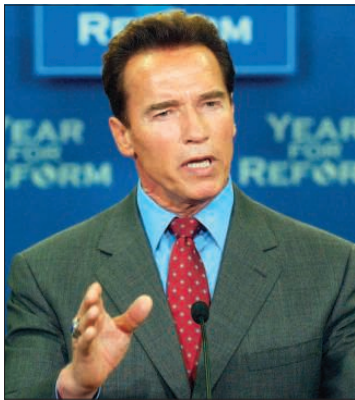
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Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger answers a question during a news conference Tuesday in Sacramento, Calif. He was in Washington on Thursday promoting a proposal to redraw congressional state legislative districts.

Schwarzenegger's redistricting plan has GOP nervous

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some of California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's fellow Republicans are promoting a plan that would let him run for president. He's promoting a plan that could cost some of them their jobs.

As Schwarzenegger visits Capitol Hill on Thursday to meet with California lawmakers, his proposal to redraw congressional and state legislative districts could be at the top of the agenda for some Republican House members.

When he arrived at the Capitol, Schwarzenegger told reporters that he hoped to accomplish "as much as we can, I can guarantee you that."

Asked if he came with a wish list, Schwarzenegger said: "Oh yes, I have it in my pocket."

The governor didn't escape home-state political battles. He was greeted by a full-page ad in the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call taken out by the California Nurses Association, with whom he's been fighting over nurse staffing ratios. "As soon as he got to

Sacramento, the governor put civil health policy up for sale," the ad said.

Schwarzenegger began his day meeting with House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis, R-Calif.

Schwarzenegger wants a panel of retired judges to redraw California's political map next year. That job is currently done by state lawmakers, and under the normal timeline wouldn't happen until after the 2010 census.

Schwarzenegger argues his plan would result in a more democratic process and more competitive elections. It could also lead to more moderate politicians, like himself, who would be easier for him to work with in Sacramento.

But some Republicans fear redrawing districts in Democrat-leaning California could cost the party seats in Congress.

Even if the GOP managed to keep the 20 seats it now holds — Democrats have 33 — powerful lawmakers who lead in the Republican-controlled House could find themselves fighting for their jobs before unfamiliar voters.

ation-building included in Bush war budget bill

Aid requested for Afghanistan, Ukraine and Middle East

By ALAN FRAM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Money for public opinion research for the new Ukrainian government, seven provincial Afghan hospitals and Palestinian community centers was included in President Bush's \$81.9 billion request for war funding and aid to U.S. allies, according to administration documents obtained by The Associated Press.

The materials, obtained Wednesday, also describe spending to start a law school in Afghanistan, smooth the issuance of Ukraine's driver's licenses and passports and build water treatment facilities in Jordan.

The papers, spotty in detail, describe how \$4 billion of Bush's proposal would be spent for a handful of countries, the Palestinians, and trouble spots like Sudan and Indian Ocean countries felled by the December tsunami.

On Wednesday, two top House Republicans said lawmakers might remove some foreign aid proposals from Bush's latest package.

Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., said lawmakers would scrutinize the request for items that could be dropped until later this year.

The overall war and foreign aid bill Bush sent Congress Monday was dominated by \$749 billion for the Defense Department, mostly for its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Half of the \$4 billion in foreign aid the documents describe would be for Afghanistan. That includes \$68 million to build 65 schools and seven technical training centers and provide vocational training, teaching training for women and scholarships abroad.

There is also \$25 million for the country's legal sector, and another \$69 million would be for seven provincial hospitals, 210 health clinics and other health projects.

There would be \$285 million to train Afghan police, including providing 532 "embedded" advisers, 34 driving practice ranges and literacy training. Other Afghan expenditures would include \$300 million for the country's electrical system; \$82 million for water and farm projects; \$66 million to develop private businesses; and \$85 million for creating legal and electoral systems.

The \$200 million for economic and military aid for Jordan would include unspecified funds for school construction, job training, night vision equipment and other gear for border guards.

Ukraine, where free elections were held a month ago, would get \$60 million that the papers say would be largely aimed at helping pro-western President Viktor Yushchenko solidify his victory so his party could win a parliamentary majority in the scheduled March 2006 elections.

The \$200 million for Palestinians would include money for promoting trade, boosting agriculture, building schools and community centers, instituting democratic reforms and providing social services.

Lawmakers seek to speed digital television transition

By GENARO C. ARMAS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers agree to speed the transition to digital television said Thursday the government may need to help millions of low-income Americans keep their analog TVs working.

About 21 million homes, or 19 percent of U.S. households, get their TV signals using over-the-air antennas. They would be useless by the end of 2006 — the date Congress would like the digital shift to be complete — without also using a converter box.

Digital broadcasts offer sharper pictures than the traditional analog transmissions used in most TV sets. A digital broadcaster has

the capability of transmitting high-definition images, or could offer multiple channels.

The December 2006 date isn't a hard deadline; according to law it could be pushed back until 85 percent of homes in a market can get digital TV. Nationally, only 12 percent of homes have digital sets, according to the Consumer Electronics Association.

Two leading House Energy and Commerce Committee members — Reps. Joe Barton, R-Texas, the chairman, and Fred Upton, R-Mich. — said they might introduce legislation that would eliminate the 85 percent provision in order to speed the transition.

But to do that, Barton, Upton and other lawmakers said, Congress may have to ensure that people who use analog TVs with antennas can still use their sets.

Nearly half of the 21 million homes that get antenna TV reception have incomes under \$30,000, according to the Government Accountability Office. At a hearing Thursday, witnesses told the panel that a box that could be hooked up to the TV could convert the digital signal into an analog signal. Each box could cost up to \$100.

A government program to help subsidize the cost of the boxes could cost between \$460 million and \$2 billion, depending on the price of the box and whether there would be income limits.

"If Congress did nothing, those households which rely exclusively on over-the-air television service could see their television sets go dark" at the end of the digital television transition, Upton said.

Congress addressing class-action suits

WASHINGTON — Congress sent President Bush legislation Thursday aimed at discouraging multimillion-dollar class-action lawsuits by having federal judges take them away from state courts, a victory for conservatives who hope it will lead to other lawsuit limits.

The legislation the House passed, 279-149, is the first of Bush's 2005 legislative priorities to win congressional approval.

The Senate voted 72-26 for the bill Feb. 10. The president has signed class-action suits as often frivolous, and businesses complain that state judges and juries have been too generous to plaintiffs.

No contest in Philly baby kidnapping

PHILADELPHIA — A woman pleaded no contest Wednesday to charges she kidnapped a baby during a 1997 house fire and raised the girl as her own for six years.

Prosecutors have said that 42-year-old Carolyn Correa, desperate for a baby of her own after suffering a miscarriage, conspired to set the blaze and steal the 10-day-old child from her crib.

Correa pleaded no contest to kidnapping, interfering with parental custody and conspiracy and could get 25 to 50 years in prison. No sentencing date was set.

Correa is undergoing psychiatric evaluation.

Lighters on planes still permitted

WASHINGTON — Passengers on U.S. airlines could still carry butane lighters onto planes on Wednesday, even though a congressionally ordered ban was supposed to go into effect on Tuesday.

The Transportation Security Administration, the agency charged with prohibiting dangerous items on aircraft, offered no comment on why it missed the deadline.

The ban was ushered through Congress last year by Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., and Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

The TSA allows passengers to carry two butane lighters and four books of matches on board a plane.

From The Associated Press

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Hope persists for separating Romanian twins

BY JAMIE STENGLE
The Associated Press

DALLAS — When Claudia and Alin Dogaru's twin daughters were born conjoined at the head a year ago, doctors told them nothing could be done. But the Romanian couple found renewed hope when they learned that Dallas surgeons successfully separated them 2-year-old Egyptian conjoined twins in 2003. Now the entire family is in Dallas as Tatiana and Anastasia undergo evaluation for possible separation.

"If we can do nothing, then that will be so, but we will search for a second opinion," said Alin Dogaru, 30.

The case is complex — the top of Tatiana's head is attached to the back of Anastasia's and each girl relies on the other for basic functions — so it could be a month or so before doctors know if surgery is even possible.

Still, the separation of Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim has given doctors hope as well. The boys, who were also joined at the head, are now active 3½-year-olds, walking and talking.

"I think that we are more optimistic today than we were five years ago in the separation of craniopagus twins because of our experience with the boys," said Dr. Kenneth Salyer, a craniofacial surgeon and founder of the Dallas-based World Craniofacial Foundation, which brought both sets of twins to the United States.

Born Jan. 13, 2004, in Rome, the girls were brought to Texas in October to be evaluated.

The Dogarus, who live in Italy, are together again after Alin arrived in Dallas a couple of weeks ago to be with his wife, the twins and their 4-year-old daughter, Maria Cristina.



Alin Dogaru, right, plays Wednesday with twin daughters Anastasia, center, and Tatiana, who are conjoined at the head, as Tatiana is held by their mother, Claudia Dogaru, in Dallas.

Twins born joined at the head — called craniopagus twins — are extremely rare, occurring in about 1 in 2.5 million births.

After the girls were born, doctors told them nothing more could be done, and the family was sent to their home in the southern Italian town of Calabria, where Alin Dogaru has served as a Byzantine Rite Catholic priest for the past three years.

"No one in Italy could do anything," said Alin Dogaru.

Besides sharing a series of veins, there are other complications. Anastasia, who is larger than her sister, only has a small portion of her kidneys. So most kidney function is taken care of by Tatiana. And Anastasia doesn't eat much, relying on her sister for nutrition.

Salyer said that he hopes for a decision on surgery in two to three months. From there, doctors must work on a separation plan. The plan for the Egyptian boys took more than a year to develop.

Judge: Keep baby on life support

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — A mother fighting to keep a hospital from removing her infant son from the ventilator that has kept him alive since birth has won another temporary restraining order.

The 1st Court of Appeals reinstated the order keeping 4-month-old Sun Hudson on life support Wednesday, just hours after a probate court judge lifted the order. A hearing was set for Tuesday.

The dispute centers on the legal standard over hospital care in Texas.

Under state law, a hospital must continue care if there is a reasonable probability that another hospital will admit the patient.

Texas Children's Hospital officials have said no treatment can save Sun, and they want to remove him from life support. Hospital lawyers said state officials have contacted almost 40

facilities and none have been willing to care for infant.

But the boy's mother, Wanda Hudson, believes her son will recover. Her attorney argued there is a reasonable chance another hospital would take the child.

Sun suffers from thanatophoric dysplasia, a genetic condition characterized by extremely short limbs, a narrow chest, small ribs and underdeveloped lungs.

Infants usually are stillborn or die shortly after birth from respiratory failure. However, there have been rare documented cases of survivors.

"He is slowly suffocating to death because his lungs lack the capability to support his body," the hospital said.

Hudson hasn't seen her son in more than a month but says she believes she communicates with him telepathically.

"Sun is going to live forever," she said. "As long as the Sun is in the sky, he will live. I don't believe in death."

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Players must be 18 years of age or older. Minors and minors under 18 may not accompany parent or guardian to this event. No cash prizes. No consolation prizes. Prizes of employees working Super Bingo prohibited. Food and beverages available for purchase inside. No Gym. Outside food and beverages prohibited.

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FACES

Kid Rock arrested at Nashville strip club

Kid Rock was arrested Wednesday by Nashville, Tenn., police on charges that he punched a disc jockey at a strip club.

The 34-year-old rapper was released after posting a \$3,000 bond on a charge of simple assault, a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail.

Authorities said he was charged after a 3 a.m. altercation at Christie's Cabaret near downtown Nashville.

"Inside the establishment there was a squabble concerning, I guess, the selection of music," said Nashville police Sgt. James Smith.

Television footage from outside the club showed the DJ, identified as Jay Campos, with a red mark on his face and holding his broken eyeglasses.

Nicolas Cage, wife expecting

Actor Nicolas Cage and his wife, Alice Kim, are expecting their first child, his publicist said Tuesday in Los Angeles.

"I can definitely confirm that," said spokeswoman Annett Wolf.

She declined to provide additional details.

The couple married in July. It was the third marriage for Cage, 41, and the first for his new wife, whom he met when he visited a Los Angeles restaurant where she was working as a waitress.

Cage, star of the recent hit "National Treasure," won the best actor Oscar for "Leaving Las Vegas." He has a son from a previous relationship.

Crazy about sharp-dressed men

Katie Couric is going crazy for sharp-dressed men. Esquire magazine is launching a nationwide search for "The Best-Dressed Real Man in America," with the five finalists to appear on the "Today" show, co-hosted by Couric.

Beginning March 15, Esquire will sit through contestants in 10 U.S. cities. A panel of editors and "local celebrities" will judge who is a cut above the rest.

"Right now, men in the U.S. are showing more originality in personal style than ever before," said Esquire Editor-in-Chief David Granger.

The five finalists will appear on the NBC morning show in September. Viewers will be able to vote for their choice through Esquire's Web site.

A long-awaited Grammy for N'Dour

"Perseverance always pays," said Youssou N'Dour of his first Grammy Award—for "Egypt," the winner for best contemporary world music album.

"It was a spiritual album. ... I tried something different and have made a leap forward in my career," N'Dour was quoted Tuesday as telling Senegal's government-run Le Soleil daily.

"This is the only thing I lacked in my long career," he said.

A superstar in his West African nation of Senegal, N'Dour rose to prominence in the United States and Europe in the 1980s with his group's homegrown popular music, mbaxex.

The music is a mix of the traditional drumming of Senegal's Wolof ethnic group, African-rooted Cuban sounds and American soul and rock.

Introductions by Destiny's Child

Say Shaq's name.

Destiny's Child will make the player introductions at the NBA All-Star game Sunday at the basketball league announced Tuesday.

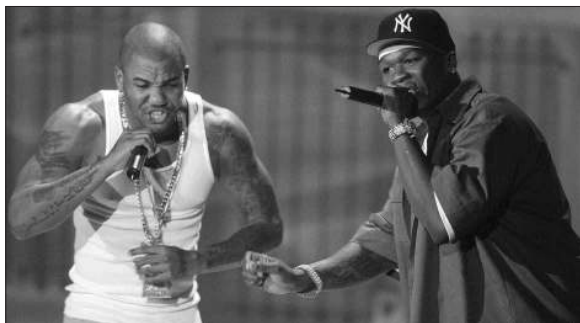
Country singers LeAnn Rimes and Big & Rich were also announced as the game's halftime performers for the game in Denver.

On Saturday, as part of the dunk contest and 3-point shootout festivities, Kelly Clarkson and the Goo Goo Dolls will perform.



Destiny's Child

Photos and stories from The Associated Press



Rappers The Game, left, and 50 Cent perform at last year's Vibe awards in Santa Monica, Calif.

From drug dealer to No. 1

The Game's debut CD 'The Documentary' makes a case for West Coast rap's return

BY RYAN PEARSON

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Myth-making can be as important as musicianship in the gangster rap world.

Tupac Shakur was known as the thoughtful son of a Black Panther activist. Easy-E was a hustler who once sold tapes out of the trunk of his car.

And so The Game, who carefully studied their careers, introduces himself with this tale: Raised largely in foster care and beat up daily when he wore Blood red to Crip-dominated Compton High School, he still managed to nab a basketball scholarship to Washington State — only to be kicked out for selling drugs on campus.

Uninterested in music at the time, he turned to stealing cars and other crimes, but was shot five times in 2001 when thieves invaded his drug-selling spot.

"Twenty-three hours later, he says, 'I woke up from a coma and I had the gift of rap.'"

Appearances on underground mixtapes rapidly led to a deal with super-producer Dr. Dre, who has tutored The Game and overseen his debut, "The Documentary." Released last month, it's expected to be among the year's top-sellers. The CD tops this week's Billboard album chart.

The release includes a collaboration with 50 Cent, "How We Do." Another song, "Westside Story," gives the short version of Game's life: "Sold crack, got jacked. Got shot, came back, jumped on Dre's back. Payback! Home, I'm bringing C-A back."

The C-A in question is California, where the seminal gangster rap scene has slumped in popularity recently as Dre looked elsewhere for talent (finding Eminem in Detroit and 50 Cent in New York) while pioneers like Ice Cube eased out of music.

The calculating, heavily tattooed 25-year-old Game, always ready with a snarl for videos and publicity photos, said he pieced together his style and persona by listening to Cube's "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted," Tupac's "All Eyez On Me" and other rap landmarks.

"I tried to take everybody who I thought was legendary, who I thought had classic material, and combine 'em all," he said during a break between filming an independent movie and a meeting with Interscope Records chairman Jimmy Iovine.

"I took Jay-Z's cockiness and his swagger, I took 'Pac's ambition and his work ethic. I took [Notorious] B.I.G.'s wordplay and his metaphorical climate, I took Snoop Dogg's gang-banging and California lifestyle. I took Kool G Rap and Ice Cube and their flow."

But Game, whose real name is Jayceon Taylor, doesn't even think of himself as primarily a musician.

"I consider myself to be a businessman," he said. "Doing music is a branch on the tree. The other branches are filmmaking and endorsements."

A Reebok sneaker deal is in the works, as is a movie, "Millionaire Boys Club." Michael K. Williams (Omar from HBO's "The Wire") and Shari Headley ("Coming to America") star alongside Game in the gangster tale and love story he describes as "a cross between Menace II Society and 'Love Jones.'" The film is currently in production; Game plans to shop it to studios as a theatrical release.

Next up, the 6-foot-4 rapper — nicknamed by his grandmother for being "game" to try anything as a child — is trying to get back into basketball.

He went head-to-head with pros like Ralston Alston at last summer's Rucker Park tournament in New York. And as with his rap career, there are no plans to start small: He's aiming for a 10-day NBA contract.

"You ask anybody about my game, you'll see," he said.

What Game won't do is turn on Dre. He slows down and drops his voice when speaking of the legendary producer, whom he idolized along with other members of the pioneering Compton-based group N.W.A. When he was 10, he watched group members hand out gifts in his neighborhood and talk about his community on television.

"It was just beautiful. Everybody was feeling them," he said.

"I just felt like Compton was all one big family. I really appreciated it."

Now, having moved to a condominium in Beverly Hills, Game considers Dre both a musical mentor and a life-saver, for pulling him out of his dangerous Compton life with a recording contract.

"He brings the best outta me. I owe everything to Dre," he said. "If it wasn't for Dre, I'd probably be dead right now."

The Game

on his mentor, Dr. Dre

Prostate cancer vaccine promising

BY MARILYNN MARCHIONE
The Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Doctors are reporting their first success at improving survival in men with advanced prostate cancer by using a treatment that trains the immune system to fight tumors.

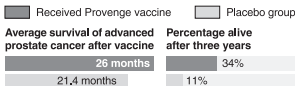
The approach is called a cancer vaccine although unlike traditional vaccines, it treats disease rather than prevents it.

In a study of 127 men with advanced prostate cancer, those who got the vaccine lived an average of 4½ months longer than those who were given fake treatments. After three years, survival was 34 percent in the vaccine group and only 11 percent in the other.

That's a huge difference. These are people who have relatively few options, with limited survival," said Dr. Eric Small of the University of California in San Francisco, who led the study and

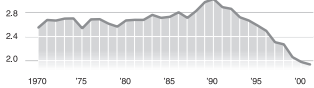
Survival boost for advanced prostate cancer

A cancer vaccine that trains the immune system to fight cancer is responsible for the first success in improving survival for men with advanced prostate cancer. Those who received the vaccine lived an average of 4 1/2 months longer than those who were given a placebo.



Prostate cancer remains No. 2 killer in men

3.2 deaths per 100,000 population



SOURCES: National Cancer Institute, National Center for Health Statistics; Dandreon Corp.; University of California, San Francisco

will give results at a first-of-its-kind prostate cancer research meeting that was to open Thursday in Orlando.

The meeting is intended to bring more muscle to fighting the disease, which is the most common non-skin cancer in American men.

About 230,000 new cases and 30,000 deaths from it are expected this year.

The vaccine, called Provenge, doesn't work like chemotherapy, and its side effects typically are only a couple days of fevers and

chills — like what people feel when they are fighting off a cold.

The vaccine combines a protein found in most prostate cancers with a substance that helps specialized immune system cells recognize cancer as a threat, just as they recognize and confront germs that enter the body.

In the study, men treated with Provenge survived an average of 26 months compared with 21.4 months for those who received dummy vaccine. After three years, 28 of the 82 men who got vaccine were alive but only five of the 45 in the placebo group were.

Study delivers good news for moms in painful labor

BY JEFF DONN
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Though medical authorities have dropped their reservations about giving women epidurals early in labor, some doctors and pregnant women still worry the painkiller's numbing effect will prolong labor and prompt a Caesarean section.

A study reported in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine may finally dispel those fears.

"Women often feel guilty or weak when they request an epidural early in labor. I hope this study will help women see that there is no shame in asking for an epidural," said lead author Dr. Cynthia Wong of Northwestern University in Chicago. "The message for women and their obstetricians and gynecologists is that there is no reason why women who want an epidural should not get it when they first request it."

More than 3.5 million women go into labor each year in this country. Epidural use has greatly expanded over the past decade, to more than 1.5 million women annually.

Epidurals deliver numbing medicine through a skinny plastic tube that is threaded into the back, close to spinal nerves, mostly bypassing the mother's bloodstream. More recent techniques, sometimes called "walking epidurals," provide lighter doses, allow

women to push, and even enable them to walk throughout labor.

Doctors have welcomed epidurals as an alternative to "systemic" pain medicine through the bloodstream, which can leave a woman feeling nauseated and doped-up and even enter the baby's body.

The Northwestern University study tested a type of low-dose pain relief known as a "combined spinal epidural." A small dose of pain reliever is first injected into the spinal fluid, and the epidural is later fed through the same hole into a space a bit farther from the spine.

In this study, 728 women in first-time labor were divided into two groups. One group received the spinal shot and then got epidurals when the cervix was dilated to about 2 centimeters. The other group initially received pain-relieving medicine directly into their bloodstreams, and put off epidurals until 4 centimeters if they could tolerate the pain.

In the end, the C-section rate was statistically a tie: 18 percent in the early epidural group and 21 percent in the delayed group.

The early epidural group also delivered 90 minutes sooner than the other women, who averaged eight hours in labor. However, Dr. Gary Hankins, an obstetrician at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston who helped shape the medical guidelines, said it is not clear if that finding would apply broadly.

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YOUR MONEY

Get to know credit score before tying knot

By EILEEN AMBROSE

The Baltimore Sun

If personal ads were pragmatic, you might see a pitch like this: Single female with 820 credit score seeks single male with 800-plus score who enjoys moonlit walks on the beach.

But in matters of the heart, people are rarely practical. It's not unusual for financial opposites to attract, where someone with a good credit history marries a bad credit risk. Often these differences go undiscovered until the two try to buy a house and are denied a loan—or at least one with favorable terms—because of a partner's poor money management.

"Unfortunately, we don't always talk about financial issues. It's so unromantic," said Sheryl Garrett, a Kansas financial writer and author of "Just Give Me The Answers."

But romance can be quickly extinguished, too, if one partner's financial troubles spill over onto the other. David Duggs, a family lawyer in Baltimore, said money is the root of 80 percent of the divorces he handles.

The key to preventing money troubles in talk about finances before walking down the aisle. Only after finding out that credit histories are incompatible can couples begin to take the necessary steps to improve one partner's weak record while preserving the other's good credit.

Broadening the picture of finances isn't always easy.

Some financial planners and divorce lawyers recommend that couples exchange credit reports and credit scores before marriage. A score is typically a three-digit number used to predict the likelihood that a consumer will default on bills. It affects whether or not credit is extended to a consumer and under what terms. Top scores are usually in the 800s.

Looking at credit reports annually is a good idea, anyway, to discover any inaccuracies that could negatively affect how creditors look at a consumer, said Holly Hunter, a financial planner in Portsmouth, N.H.

The big three credit bureaus—Experian, (888) 397-3742; Equifax, (800) 685-1111; and TransUnion, (800) 888-4213—sell credit reports.

A new federal law will entitle consumers to one free credit report a year.

Granted, it's not romantic to study your significant other's credit history. "It's much more romantic than having a divorce two years later," said Ryan Sjoblad, a spokesman for myFICO.com, which sells the widely used FICO credit score.

A lot of couples go into marriage having no idea of what baggage the other person is carrying with them," said Sjoblad, who jokes that scores someday might appear in personal ads.

But other financial experts say that requesting a credit report can put a partner on the defensive.



Janice and Richard Aparis of Anahiem, Calif., wave to friends and family after getting married Monday at "A Little White Wedding Chapel" in Las Vegas. As unromantic as it sounds, financial experts recommend couples review each other's credit reports before saying "I do."

Instead, they recommend couples ease into the topic by discussing goals and how they can financially achieve them. Also, couples can attend financial seminars and classes together, or both can read and discuss the same financial book. Garrett recommends Ruth Hayden's "For Richer, Not Poorer"—The Money Book for Couples."

What if one of you has a good financial track record and the other's is wanting? State laws vary on the financial obligations of married partners and on the division of property and debts in divorce. Couples with serious financial

difficulties should seek the help of a professional.

But here are some general guidelines for dealing with mismatched credit histories:

■ **Keeping separate accounts.** At least initially, maintain separate bank and charge accounts, and work on building up the spouse's weak credit record, advised Barry J. Dalneoff, an Annapolis, Md., lawyer and chair of the family law section of the Maryland State Bar Association.

■ **Improving a credit record.** Credit scores often are lowered by late payments, so paying bills on time can do a lot to improve a

score. To get a partner in the habit of making bill payments, both spouses can set up a time each month where they stay home, order a pizza and sit down to review and pay bills, Hunter suggested.

Couples, too, can open a joint charge account with a low credit limit and pay off balances each month to rebuild the weaker credit record, Dalneoff said.

Within two years, someone could see a noticeable improvement in their credit score, experts said.

■ **Buying a home.** This is when credit problems often come to light.

■ **Hunter, a former loan officer with a bank, recalled asking a young couple for a list of their credit cards as she worked with them on a mortgage application. The wife handed a stack of credit cards under the table to Hunter. "She didn't want me to see all the credit cards she had," Hunter said.**

When one spouse is not credit-worthy, lenders often will try to see if the spouse with the good credit record can qualify alone for a mortgage. Both names, though, can be on the title. For psychological reasons, it's often better for spouses to take out a mortgage loan together, even if they have to pay a higher rate because of one partner's weak credit score, Garrett said.

With on-time mortgage payments, the partners' credit scores eventually improve. And when that happens, the couple can refinance to get better terms, Garrett said.

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES

52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg	52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg
10,358.07	9,700.45	Dow Jones Industrial	10,358.07	+2.4	+0.02	+1.21	10,358.07	9,700.45	Dow Jones Industrial	10,358.07	+2.4	+0.02	+1.21
3,623.96	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,623.96	+7.52	+0.21	+6.82	3,623.96	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,623.96	+7.52	+0.21	+6.82
556.11	529.08	Dow Jones Utilities	556.11	+2.61	+0.47	+9.87	556.11	529.08	Dow Jones Utilities	556.11	+2.61	+0.47	+9.87
7,211.33	6,211.33	NYSE Composite	7,211.33	+1.04	+0.01	+0.75	7,211.33	6,211.33	NYSE Composite	7,211.33	+1.04	+0.01	+0.75
1,985.26	1,538.74	Amex Index	1,985.26	+2.46	+0.12	+6.39	1,985.26	1,538.74	Amex Index	1,985.26	+2.46	+0.12	+6.39
2,431.02	1,958.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,431.02	+2.3	+0.09	+5.25	2,431.02	1,958.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,431.02	+2.3	+0.09	+5.25
1,217.90	1,069.72	S&P 500	1,217.90	+2.27	+0.19	+5.48	1,217.90	1,069.72	S&P 500	1,217.90	+2.27	+0.19	+5.48
546.99	546.29	S&P MidCap	546.99	+0.07	+0.01	+0.13	546.99	546.29	S&P MidCap	546.99	+0.07	+0.01	+0.13
666.11	515.90	Russell 2000	666.11	+3.91	+0.62	+1.95	666.11	515.90	Russell 2000	666.11	+3.91	+0.62	+1.95
12,204.38	10,268.52	DJ Wilshire 5000	12,204.38	+12.59	+0.11	+1.21	12,204.38	10,268.52	DJ Wilshire 5000	12,204.38	+12.59	+0.11	+1.21

NYSE

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)				MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)			
Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	Vol	Last	Chg
Alcoa	362956	24.95	-27	SPDR	488	24.95	+1.4
Pfizer	216230	3.34	-05	SemiorHfr	91	24.95	+1.4
ExxonMbl	186907	58.48	+1.56	ISHJpan	91	24.95	+1.4
QuestCm	181801	3.97	-07	ISHZK2000	90	24.95	+1.4
CocaCl	168263	43.30	+6.5	SP Energy	44	24.95	+1.4
WrightEx	n/a	14.44	n/a	BLLA Dm	44	24.95	+1.4
Motorola	162795	15.73	-27	QSV5HT	37	24.95	+1.4
HewlettP	162579	21.06	-06	SP Incl	29	24.95	+1.4
Textstr	152441	26.09	+0.5	Telkomcn	24	24.95	+1.4
TycoIntl	149314	33.71	-06	Niabors	24	24.95	+1.4

AMEX

(\$1 OR MORE)		MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)			
Last	Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
121.19	+06	Nasdaq100T	784981	37.98	-14
33.76	+34	JDS UNIPH	751098	1.91	-11
10.60	+15	Intel	699478	24.14	-33
126.98	+38	Agilent	577064	17.50	+01
41.70	+114	Microsoft	567145	25.79	-14
108.45	-02	Cisco	504000	17.71	-21
95.74	+254	SiriusS	384202	6.04	+07
30.38	-21	SunMicro	306573	4.25	+02
4.99	-25	NetwAp	299716	31.73	-263
55.56	+173	MCI Inc	299182	20.87	+32

NASDAQ

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)				MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)				
Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	Vol	Last	Chg	
Alcoa	362956	24.95	-27	SPDR	488	24.95	+1.4	
Pfizer	216230	3.34	-05	SemirHfr	28	24.95	+1.4	
ExxonMbl	186907	58.48	+1.56	ISHJpan	91	24.95	+1.4	
QuestCm	181801	3.97	-07	ISHZK2000	90	24.95	+1.4	
CocaCl	168263	43.30	+6.5	SP Emy	44	24.95	+1.4	
WrightEx	n/a	14.454	17.10	-05	DIA Dm	44	24.95	+1.4
Motorola	162795	15.73	-27	QSV5HT	37	24.95	+1.4	
HewlettP	165279	21.06	-06	SP Incl	29	24.95	+1.4	
Textst	152441	26.09	+0.5	Telkomet	24	24.95	+1.4	
TycoIntl	149314	33.71	-06	Niabors	23	24.95	+1.4	

(\$1 OR MORE)		MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)			
Last	Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
121.19	+06	Nasdaq100T	784981	37.98	-14
33.76	+34	JDS UNIPH	751098	1.91	-11
10.60	+15	Intel	699478	24.14	-33
126.98	+38	Agilent	577064	17.50	+01
41.70	+114	Microsoft	567145	25.79	-14
108.45	-02	Cisco	504000	17.71	-21
95.74	+254	SiriusS	384202	6.04	+07
30.38	-21	SunMicro	306573	4.25	-02
4.99	-25	NetwAp	299716	31.73	-263
55.56	+173	MCI Inc	299182	20.87	+32

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

Name	High	Low	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg
Alliant Techsystems	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Airbus	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
Boeing	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
General Electric	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Lockheed Martin	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
Northrop Grumman	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Raytheon	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
United Technologies	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Westinghouse	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
Boeing	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
General Electric	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Lockheed Martin	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
Northrop Grumman	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Raytheon	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2
United Technologies	27	27	0.85	+3.2	+6.8
Westinghouse	1.03	23	0.32	+1.2	+1.2

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

Name	High	Low	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg
Fidelity Asset Growth	38.87	38.87	-0.5	-1.3	-1.3
Fidelity Divd Growth	54.90	54.90	-1.7	-3.1	-3.1
Fidelity Mid-Cap	29.98	29.98	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3
Fidelity Spartan Growth	46.21	46.21	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2
Fidelity Asset Growth	38.87	38.87	-0.5	-1.3	-1.3
Fidelity Divd Growth	54.90	54.90	-1.7	-3.1	-3.1
Fidelity Mid-Cap	29.98	29.98	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3
Fidelity Spartan Growth	46.21	46.21	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2
Fidelity Asset Growth	38.87	38.87	-0.5	-1.3	-1.3
Fidelity Divd Growth	54.90	54.90	-1.7	-3.1	-3.1
Fidelity Mid-Cap	29.98	29.98	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3
Fidelity Spartan Growth	46.21	46.21	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2
Fidelity Asset Growth	38.87	38.87	-0.5	-1.3	-1.3
Fidelity Divd Growth	54.90	54.90	-1.7	-3.1	-3.1
Fidelity Mid-Cap	29.98	29.98	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3
Fidelity Spartan Growth	46.21	46.21	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	100.00
Japanese yen (Feb. 18)	100.00
South Korean won (Feb. 17)	1,000.00
Euro (Feb. 17)	1.3365
Dollar buys (Feb. 17)	-0.7471
British pound (Feb. 17)	-0.594
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	3.77
British pound	\$1.86
Canada (Canadian dollar)	0.75
Denmark (Krone)	6.75
Egypt (Pound)	\$1,304.04/100
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.79
Hungary (Forint)	136.65
Iceland (Krona)	62.14
India (Rupee)	47.84
Japan (Yen)	106.36
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.291
Norway (Krone)	4.66
Philippines (Peso)	15.03
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7501
Switzerland (Dollar)	1.2625
South Korea (Won)	1,000.00
Switzerland (Dollar)	1.2625
Thailand (Baht)	36.37
Thailand (New Lin)	1.18
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom.)	
(U.S. purchasing British pounds in Germany) check with your local currency bank facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference; actual buying currency. All figures are foreign dollar rates to the dollar, except for the British pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Wedding gift expenses

MarketWatch

To spend appropriately: Don't be limited by the couple's registry. You don't have to buy something there, especially if the items left are pricey. Try thinking about the modest things couples don't always register for, such as a basket with cookbooks and miscellaneous cooking utensils.

Pick and choose which prewedding events you attend. You're not required to attend—or bring a gift to—them all.

Consider a cash gift. There's no polite way for the couple to ask for cash; however, many newlyweds would be grateful for money that they can put toward a down payment for a house or car (or any necessary household items they don't receive).

Try a more personal gift. If you know the couple likes to dance, why not sign them up for salsa lessons? You also might contribute something to their honeymoon, such as surfboard lessons if they're going to Hawaii.

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc	\$425.50
Gold	\$425.50
Silver	\$7.248

INTEREST RATES

Federal funds market rate	2.5
3-month bill	2.5
30-year bond	4.5
Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Woman hits police

IN SOUTH BEND — A 79-year-old woman has been charged with using her wooden cane to strike police officers who arrived at her home to check on her welfare.

St. Joseph County prosecutors said the officers came to investigate a possible domestic abuse charge against Betty Chambers' live-in caretaker, Thomas Holleman, 57. As the officers tried to handcuff Holleman, Chambers allegedly struck officer Lonny Foresman over the head with her cane, prosecutors said.

Foresman suffered a mild concussion while Sgt. John Pavlekovich suffered a separated shoulder and hand injury, said Jaimes Thurion, a spokeswoman for St. Joseph County police.

Prosecutors charged Chambers and Holleman with resisting law enforcement and battery.

State whiskey banned

AL MONTGOMERY — Alabama's official state whiskey has been banned from sale in the state.

The Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board notified Conecuh Ridge Distillery that its state license had been revoked because of liquor law violations by its founder. The Legislature is in the process of repealing Conecuh Ridge's designation as the official state whiskey.

The Troy-based company has been in turmoil since founder Kenny May pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges involving illegal sales, including selling a case of whiskey to an 18-year-old girl. Alabama's legal drinking age is 21.

The Alabama Legislature voted last year, over Gov. Bob Riley's veto, to make Conecuh Ridge Alabama's "official state spirit."

The product is made in Kentucky, but May asserted that it was based on a recipe created by his father, Clyde May, a famous Alabama bootlegger.

Poor may lose housing

MA BOSTON — About 4,700 of the state's poorest citizens would be at risk of losing their state-subsidized housing after three years, and many would be required to work while receiving housing benefits, under a proposal in Gov. Mitt Romney's budget plan.

The administration said the three-year limit on people who participate in the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program is consistent with Romney's emphasis on helping the poor become self-sufficient, but critics say the plan does not take into account the state's expensive housing market.

The voucher program is an alternative to public housing in that it allows recipients to pay for housing on the private market, where rents average \$1,300 for a two-bedroom apartment in Boston.

Man/Boy Love raid

CA LOS ANGELES — Seven members of the North American Man/Boy Love Association, including two teachers, were arrested in Southern California and charged with allegedly planning to travel to Mexico to have sex with boys, authorities said.

An eighth man was charged

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

with distributing child pornography, said FBI spokeswoman Laura Emiller.

They were charged Monday, following a sting operation in which each man allegedly paid hundreds of dollars to an undercover agent to arrange the sex, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said during a news conference Monday.

The men had allegedly traveled from their home to Southern California with the expectation of boarding a boat to Ensenada, where they were told sex with the boys was awaiting them at a bed-and-breakfast, Emiller said.

Through the undercover agent, she said, they requested that the boys be as young as 8 years old.

NAMBIA, which was formed in 1978 and advocates relationships with men and boys, was not charged in the case.

Dem. staffers charged

WI MILWAUKEE — Five Democratic campaign staffers — including the sons of a congressman and a former city official — were ordered to stand trial for allegedly vandalizing Republican get-out-the-vote vans on Election Day.

The five are accused of slashing the tires of 25 vans rented by the state GOP to drive voters and monitors to the polls. The felony charge carries a maximum punishment of 3½ years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Arraignment was set for March 4.

The defendants include the sons of Wisconsin Rep. Gwen Moore and former acting Mayor Marvin Pratt.



That's gotta' hurt!

Nathan Graves comes off his horse Tuesday night in San Antonio as he competes in the 14th performance of the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo at the SBC Center. Graves received no score for the ride.

At a preliminary hearing, Levar Stoney and Opel Simmons, two Democratic presidential campaign workers sent to Wisconsin in the final weeks of the campaign, testified they were in the Milwaukee headquarters when the five left just after 3 a.m. Election Day and returned shortly after.

"They seemed to be excited, excited, kind of gleeful, laughing and kind of joking," Simmons said.

Stoney said Michael Pratt, the former acting mayor's son, talked about slashing a couple of tires, and Moore's son, Sovande Omokunde, also talked about the vandalism. He said at least one had a knife; he could not recall which one.

Defense attorneys suggested Stoney and Simmons were also part of an alleged plan to plaster the GOP office and property with Kerry-Edwards signs and bumper stickers before polls opened.

Prosecutors contend the five defendants came up with the tire-slashing plan after a security guard was posted at the GOP office.

He tried, but no dough!

CA RICHMOND — A would-be robber in a backhoe tried to rip an automatic teller machine from the wall of a bank early Monday, but did little more than make a big mess before fleeing empty-handed, police said.

"The guy stole the backhoe from around the corner at a construction site and used the front scoop to try to take out the ATM," said police spokesman Sgt. Enos Johnson.

The robber heavily damaged the bank's exterior wall and destroyed the ATM, but "the safe appeared to be intact," Johnson said.

Homicide rate up

MD UPPER MARLBORO — Prince George's County law enforcement officials are concerned about a high number of homicides this year, a spokeswoman for police Chief Melvin C. High said. Slayings in the county are up to 20 this year, including two people killed over the weekend. Last year, the county registered 148 homicides.

Sen. backs expansion

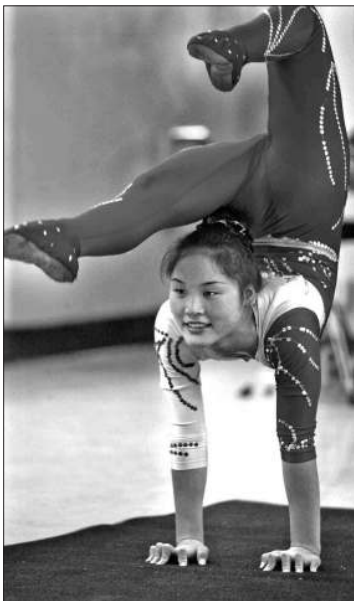
ID BOISE — Sen. Joe Steiger is pushing an expansion proposal for the Capitol that would add wings to each end of the century-old building. Another proposal to remodel the vacant county courthouse across the street and use it as an annex is also being considered.

Fire destroys bar

AL DAPHNE — A fire destroyed Judge Roy Bean's, a popular bar and concert venue that had operated since 1946. Singers Jimmy Buffett, Emmy Lou Harris and Jerry Jeff Walker were among those who performed at the old wooden building with a big fenced-in yard, where customers were greeted by a mascot and goat. Both animals survived the fire. The cause of the blaze wasn't immediately clear.



Wedding by the letters Dressed as the letter Q, kindergartner Seth Reid, leads the letter U, otherwise known as Danni Baham, down an aisle lined with their classmates during a wedding ceremony for the two little Friday at Independence Elementary School in Independence, La. The kindergarten wedding was complete with a choir, cake and flowers.



Limber lady Kong Chunmei performs in front of Hart Elementary school students Tuesday in Bakersfield, Calif. Chunmei is a part of the traveling China Star Acrobats Company from Mainland China and puts on shows all over the United States each year.



Artist's work brings in big bucks

In this photo released by Doyle New York, a photograph of the painting "A Bold Bluff," by artist Cassius Marcellus Coolidge, is shown Tuesday in New York. A pair of paintings from the famed series depicting dogs playing poker sold for \$590,400 at auction on Tuesday. The winning bid set a new auction record for Coolidge, whose previous top sale was \$74,000 for a painting at a Sotheby's auction in 1999, said Alan Fausel, director of paintings at Doyle New York, which handled the Tuesday sale. The winning bidder was a private collector from New York.



Shining their machines

Patrons at a coin-operated car wash in Killeen, Texas, put the finishing touches on their cars as the sun blankets the area with midday light Tuesday.



Facing the wall

Excelsior Education Center student Cesar Lopez III, whose sister and brother are serving in the armed forces, rapels after scaling the 24-foot rock-climbing wall during the Army of One Interactive Tour on Tuesday in Victorville, Calif. The tour visited the Victor Valley Community College campus for two days and featured interactive video games; a 3-D and audio interactive exhibit; and the rock-climbing wall.

Children recovering

FL INVERNESS — Seven children removed from a home amid allegations of torture are enrolled in public schools and adjusting to foster care, officials say.

They even have grown a little and gained a substantial amount of weight, Citrus County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Gail Tierney said.

The children's health has rebounded since Jan. 27, when they were placed in foster homes in groups of two or three, Tierney said.

They have received medical checkups and detectives check daily on their welfare. The children began attending area schools last week.

Their schoolmates are aware of the circumstances and have been protective of them, Tierney said.

The children, ages 12 to 17, have been in state custody since late last month. Authorities say their parents, John and Linda Dolan, abused at least five of them, beating them, shocking them, yanking their nails out, confining them and leaving them malnourished.

The couple each face charges of aggravated child abuse and more charges are pending, officials said. They are being extradited from Utah, where authorities said they fled fearing arrest.

Just a little 'blink'

RI PROVIDENCE — A little magnetic "blink," favored by teens and clubgoers, stirred up an intense, multiagency investigation because some Providence officers believed it was a sophisticated eavesdropping device planted inside the police station.

Three ranking officers took it to a businessman who deals in surveillance devices. When told it was a high-tech listening tool, the officers waited several days before turning it over to their union and the police administration. Police Chief Dean M. Esserman was handed an envelope containing the device — now in pieces — and he immediately called the state police to investigate.

Over the weekend, the device went through state police laboratories in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut, plus the Boston bureau of the FBI. They all came up with the same conclusion: It's just a little blinky.

Guess what, you're dead

CA PLEASANTON — When word spread that Mary Lawson had passed away at age 84, no one was more upset than Lawson herself, who was very much alive and enjoying a historical novel on CD.

An employee at Lawson's doctor's office called to inform her that, according to the Social Security Administration, she had died Jan. 11.

So how had she managed to keep her subsequent appointments? The employee laughed, and so did Lawson — until she realized the pitfalls associated with no longer being alive. She found her bank account frozen and her monthly \$832 Social Security

check missing. Her doctors were dead they couldn't claim Medicare for a corpse.

After a few stressful days, Lawson was relieved to learn that she was officially alive. The government acknowledged the mistake, resuscitated her and promised to fix any problems that had cropped up while Lawson wasn't really dead.

"I'm the healthiest ghost you've ever seen," Lawson declared.

Lowell Kepke, a Social Security spokesman, confirmed that Lawson had been reported dead but said it wasn't clear why.

New recycling campaign

RI PROVIDENCE — A new ad campaign will ask Rhode Islanders to reuse or recycle plastic grocery bags from retail stores. The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corp. says it spends nearly \$11 million a year picking up bags that blow out of trash disposers in a city in Johnston. The \$250,000 television and newspaper ad campaign is aimed at persuading residents to help combat the problem.

Center seeks nurses

NC FAYETTEVILLE — Cape Fear Valley Medical Center is sending recruiters to Canada to help reduce its nursing shortage.

Five nurses from Canada have been hired and several more are interested, the hospital says. The effort has helped reduce 141 full-time openings as of last May to just 57 in January.

Financial help for city

CA SAN DIEGO — City officials hired Lynn Turner, a former Securities and Exchange Commission accounting chief, to help sort out San Diego's troubled finances and complete overdue audits. The city is also contracting with Kroll Inc., a firm specializing in forensic accounting and litigation. San Diego has been hobbled by a pension deficit estimated at \$1.37 billion.

Justices skeptical

AZ PHOENIX — Arizona Supreme Court justices expressed skepticism as a lawyer for the state argued that alleged racial profiling isn't a legal basis to challenge traffic stops. The court is considering whether minority drug defendants are entitled to have an expert appointed for pretrial proceedings to support defense claims of racial profiling in traffic stops on Interstate 17 in Yavapai County.

Cuts to reading program

OH COLUMBUS — The reading program that once was Gov. Bob Taft's top policy priority has been folded into a new reading office in the state Education Department. Taft's \$51 billion budget proposal released last week did not contain funding specific to OhioReads grant, as the past three Taft budgets have. A separate budget for supporting OhioReads' tutors also is being cut by 8 percent.

Stories and photos from wires services

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Addresses

U.S. MAIL: Unit 45002, APO 96337-5002
INTERNATIONAL MAIL: 23-17 Ponggapi, 7-chome, Minato-ku,
Tokyo, Japan
FAX: DSN 229-3132; cv. (41) (320) 763-0900
E-MAIL: letters@pstripes.com and
advertising@pstripes.com

Marketing: marketing@pstripes.com
Circulation: circulation@pstripes.com
CENTRAL OFFICE: 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington,
DC 20045-1301. Phone DSN 229-3132 or (41) (320) 763-0900 or
(41) (202) 761-9000. Fax (41) (320) 763-0899.
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Doug Clawsen, 529 14th St. NW, Suite
350, Washington, DC 20045-1301. Phone DSN 312-
763-0945 or cv. (41) (202) 761-0945.
E-mail: clawsen@pstripes.com
EMBASSYMAN: Joe Ungren, Send comments to Embassyman, Stars
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WASHINGTON D.C.
Bureau editor: Patrick Dickson, 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301, Tel. (+1) (202) 761-0895; e-mail: dickson@pstripes.com
Lisa Briggs, cv. (+1) (703) 602-1875; Jon Anderson, tel. cv. (+1) (703) 602-1850; and Joe Shaw, 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, Calif.
Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO 96337-5002
anderson@pstripes.com and shaw@pstripes.com

Stars and Stripes (USPS #71 900) is published daily (except Christmas and New Year's) for 50 cents daily and \$1 Sunday by the Stars and Stripes central office, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, Calif.
Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO 96337-5002
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AAAFES can't spin away taxes

A few days ago I read a letter to the editor ("AAAFES often wins comparison," Feb. 8) that indicated Pacific Air Forces Army and Air Force Exchange Service gas stations are providing \$2 coupons toward purchases of eight or more gallons of gas. Can anybody out there confirm this? I inquired about this policy on the AAAFES Web site customer service page, but haven't received any response back from them. If it's true, why don't we get the same benefit here in U.S. Air Forces Europe?

I also noticed today on American Forces Network's "On Assignment" that an AFAPES rep was discussing gas prices, and it appeared she was going over the reasons why we're paying more than the stateside average price for gas. Why does AFN need to do a spot on gas prices, when we all know that we're paying 40 to 50 cents in U.S. federal and state tax on gas here in Europe. Average station prices are based on after-tax costs. AAAFES is supposed to be tax-free, but ask yourself if things are really as they seem.

A tax is a tax is a tax, no matter how AAAFES spins the story.

Why can't AAAFES just come out and say that it's basing prices on after-tax average prices? At least then we'd all know the prices, and AAAFES could put the true stories that tout "tax-free savings."

Master Sgt. Burt Stubblefield
Ramstein Air Base, Germany

Mattis an honorable Marine

As a Marine who served in Desert Shield/Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom II, I am really getting tired of the zero defect mentality of the pencil pushers and paper shufflers. Lt. Gen. James Mattis is one hell of a combat commander and you can either follow his lead, which will save lives and instill high discipline and morale in his troops, or you can just shut up.

Gen. Mattis is a combat veteran and leader. I do not care that what he said is not politically correct. I have seen enough of the "follow the leader" leadership from commanders who were more 100 percent

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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yes-men. They were not good leaders and I never want to go to combat with them.

Ask the Marines who are serving under the command of Gen. Mattis what they think. You will get a lot of "Oorahs," just as it should be. There are too many ready to judge who have never been, and who never will be, in the position of Gen. Mattis. If you haven't walked in his shoes, then you have nothing to say, so don't!

As far as all the Islamic American groups being upset, too bad. If it really bothers them that much to live in America with the freedom that is being provided by men such as Gen. Mattis, no problem: They should go back to their own countries. If this letter upsets all the bleeding-heart liberals out there, I could care less. As long as Marines such as Gen. Mattis are leading the way, we will have a better way of life and a safer America.

Master Gunnery Sgt. A.R. Nichols (retired)
Camp Kinser, Okinawa

Carroll offers little for kids

In reference to the Feb. 16 article "S. Ko-

rean visits welcomed at Camp Carroll," (Korea edition only): I would like to ask when the post is going to concentrate on providing more activities for the families of the personnel assigned there?

Granted, this post is not accustomed to having a large group of family members living around it. But it should be fairly obvious to those in charge that things have changed.

The Taegu American School (a Department of Defense Dependents Schools institution) had to add an additional bus to the Camp Carroll route this year, because of the increased number of students living in the area. Yet there still are no family-oriented activities on a regular basis. If children want to participate in any kind of sports activity, they have to be transported to Taegu.

Occasionally, there is an activity that the children can participate in on Camp Carroll. But these are usually one-day, special events, such as the "Children's Christmas Party" held in December. This was nice, but it appeared to be more for the children of the surrounding community than for those of the personnel assigned to the post, as evidenced by the number of non-English-speaking parents and children, and that the majority of announcements were made in Korean rather than English.

I think it is great that the post wants to have improved relations with the surrounding community. However, I believe that the first thing to concentrate on is offering daily activities for the families assigned to it.

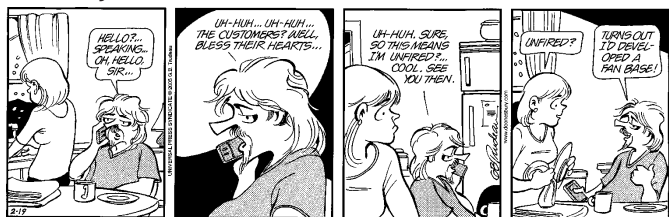
As a side note, in the notion of improved community relations, it would be really nice if the post management could get the area outside of Gate 4 cleaned up a bit. Possibly officials could request the local authorities to stop allowing vehicles to park in the area immediately around the gate, which causes a safety hazard for vehicles leaving the post. And maybe also put some pressure on the club house to remove the profanity and images of individuals putting someone off from the front of their establishments.

Chris Woods

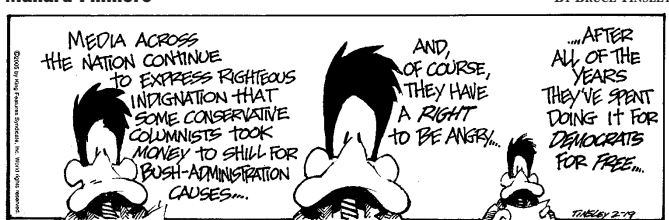
Camp Carroll, South Korea

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

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THURSDAY 2-19

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



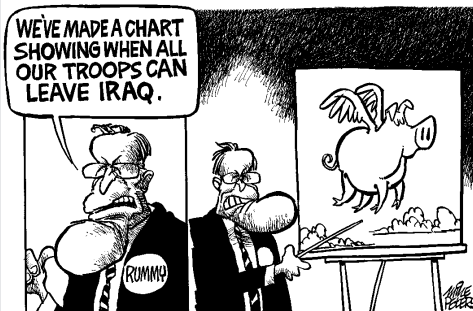
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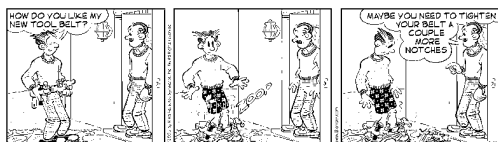
Baby Bites



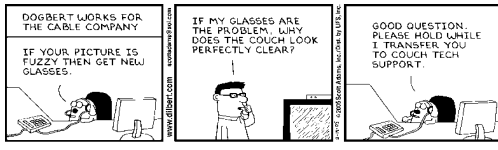
Spider Man



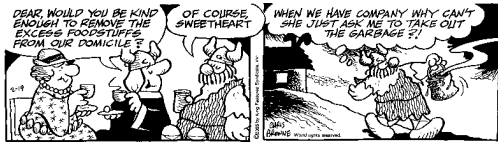
Blondie



Dilbert



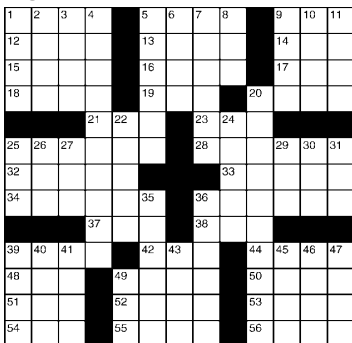
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Bunch of hoodlums
- 5 Soft drink flavor
- 9 Felon's flight
- 12 Sandwich treat
- 13 Palette choices
- 14 "I" strain
- 15 "Kiss From a Rose" singer
- 16 Puts on a show
- 17 Chic no more
- 18 Baffling
- 19 Plato's P
- 20 Joint
- 21 Tenet
- 23 Peninsula st.
- 25 Reams
- 28 Wealthy VIP
- 32 3-Day beach
- 33 Indira Gandhi's father
- 34 Canoe-like carriers
- 36 Plot
- 37 Teeny
- 38 Little, in Lyons
- 39 Name of 21 pages
- 42 Letter opener
- 44 Sketch
- 48 Pub order
- 49 Passenger's payment
- 50 Faction
- 51 Drops on the lawn
- 52 Actress Thompson

Down

- 1 "Holy cow!"
- 2 Vicinity
- 3 In the vicinity
- 4 "Laugh-In" alumna
- 5 Entrances
- 6 "That hurts!"
- 7 Release
- 8 Nincompoop
- 9 Ponce de —
- 10 Malaria symptom
- 11 Speck
- 20 Acting daughter of 4-Down
- 22 Jackson Hole's river
- 24 Cyclist Armstrong
- 25 Moo goo gai
- 26 "— Believer"
- 27 Hudson co-star
- 29 Ernesto Guevara
- 30 Branch
- 31 Calendar abbr.
- 35 Tahini ingredient
- 36 Ranch
- 39 Nephrite
- 40 Toast topper
- 41 Chops
- 43 Cookbook author
- 45 Carnival attraction
- 46 Puts into the mix
- 47 Bridge position
- 49 Govt. worker

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-19 CRYPTOQUIP

TI K ANENZFXW OKAATNC
OKX GXNNQ KF K DLFNX.
ELYXC DN RN QKWZTP
ILA PALLO KZC RLKAC?
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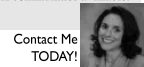
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Waltrip edges Earnhardt Jr. in Daytona qualifier

Stewart avoids melee to win second race; Johnson rips Harvick

By Mike Harris
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Michael Waltrip outraced teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr. to win the first race and Tony Stewart barely avoided a wild seven-car crash on the way to winning the nightcap Thursday in qualifying races for the Daytona 500.

The first of the 150-mile events showed that reports of the Dale Earnhardt Inc. team's demise at Daytona may have been a bit premature.

Two-time 500 winner Waltrip passed DEI teammate Earnhardt, the defending 500 champion, on the outside in the final straightaway for his victory.

"I plan out moves like that all the time and they never work," said Waltrip, who won by 0.30 seconds, or half a car length. "After practice yesterday, I knew we'd be a force in the 150 and the Daytona 500."

A lot of people weren't so sure after Earnhardt appeared down on power in the non-points Budweiser Shootout and during practice, and Waltrip also seemed to be struggling. Earnhardt conceded that the team hadn't been as dominant.

"It just seems to go by cycles," Earnhardt said. "We had our run and we've all known over the last couple of years they've been closing the gap. Yet we ain't falling off to



The car driven by Rusty Wallace (2) goes airborne after colliding with Kevin Harvick (29) and Dave Blaney (07) during the second 150-mile Daytona 500 qualifying race Thursday.

the point when we can't compete. Everybody is working hard to catch us, and eventually they will."

Jimmie Johnson, who trailed only three-time Daytona winner Dale Jarrett in pole qualifying last Sunday, was out front in the second race when he was bumped from behind in the second turn on the 2½-mile oval by Kevin Harvick.

The bump turned Johnson's Chevrolet

sideswaps and ignited a crash that took out top contenders Johnson, Harvick, Mark Martin, Joe Nemechek and Rusty Wallace.

Johnson was furious at Harvick, saying he should know better than to bump draft in the turns. He said team owner Richard Childress should fire Harvick and angrily said NASCAR should penalize him.

"It's a shame," Johnson said. "He tore up six or seven good race cars."

While Earnhardt fought an ill-handling car for much of the first 60-lap race, Waltrip moved up among the leaders and led midway through the race.

"Just to be able to finish second, I feel lucky," Earnhardt said. "He (Waltrip) did what he had to do. He did the right moves."

Mike Skinner, now a regular in NASCAR's Craftsman Truck series who plans to drive a handful of Nextel Cup races for Bill Davis Racing, led after the third caution flag of the race. He appeared on the way to victory until the DEI cars ganged up on him at the end.

Skinner, who already was guaranteed a starting spot in Sunday's 43-car race, thanks to his qualifying speed in time trials last Sunday, wound up third, followed by Ryan Newman, Ricky Rudd, defending Nextel Cup champion Kurt Busch and two-time Daytona 500 winner Jeff Gordon.

Stewart held off Jeff Burton in the closing laps of the second race, finishing about two car lengths ahead. Kevin Lepage finished third, earning a starting spot in the 500 field, as did fourth-place finisher Martin Truex Jr., the third DEI car.

A rule change this year guaranteed starting spots on Sunday to the top 35 teams in car owner points. Four more drivers made it on speed and the final four positions were up for grabs Thursday.

Making it in on qualifying speed were Jason Leffler, Boris Said, John Andretti and Mike Wallace, while Skinner, Kenny Wallace, Truex and Lepage raced in on Thursday.

Drivers who failed to make the field included Kerry Earnhardt, Dale's older half-brother who lost out when passed in the final yards by Kenny Wallace.

Report: Bruschi may have suffered stroke

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Linebacker Tedy Bruschi of the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots has a broken blood vessel in his head and might have had a minor stroke, according to newspaper reports.

Bruschi was taken to Massachusetts General Hospital on Wednesday with unexplained headaches. The possibility that he had suffered a stroke was reported in Thursday editions of the Boston Herald, which cited unidentified sources. The story also said Bruschi suffered lost vision.

The Boston Globe, citing an unidentified team source, reported on its Web site Thursday that Bruschi had a broken blood vessel in his head and suffered from partial paralysis that has since gone away. A broken blood vessel could cause a stroke if it deprives the brain of oxygen.

Patriots spokesman Stacey James said Thursday that any information on Bruschi's condition would come from the player or his family. Bruschi spent Wednesday night at the hospital and more tests were scheduled for Thursday morning, James said.

He is in good condition and will be held for further evaluations," the team said in a statement. "The Bruschi family appreciates everyone's concern, but re-

ports that you respect their privacy at this time."

A spokeswoman for Massachusetts General Hospital would neither confirm nor deny that Bruschi had been admitted and referred all questions to the Patriots. Team owner Robert Kraft, who was attending the Rutgers-Boston College basketball game on Wednesday night, declined comment.

Chargers tag Brees

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Chargers used their franchise tag Thursday on quarterback Drew Brees, who led the team to its first playoff berth in nine seasons and was the NFL's comeback player of the year.

Brees was tagged as a non-exclusive franchise player, meaning he can still negotiate with other teams. Should Brees receive an offer from another team, the Chargers can either match the new club's offer, or receive two first-round choices from that club as compensation.

As a non-exclusive franchise player, Brees received a one-year contract offer of just more than \$8 million, the average of the top five salaried quarterbacks from last season. The Chargers could try to trade Brees, but a team interested in him would want to negotiate a long-term contract before finalizing a deal.

Brees has said he'd like a long-term contract from the Chargers.



New England's Tedy Bruschi plays with his son, T.J., 4, before the Super Bowl earlier this month. The Patriots said the linebacker "is in good condition and will be held for further evaluations."

The team's quarterback situation is complicated, though, because San Diego obtained Philip Rivers in a draft-day deal with the New York Giants and gave him a \$40 million contract.

Titans' Williams arrested

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee Titans safety Tank Williams was arrested early Thursday and charged with driving under the influence after a police officer saw his vehicle make a rolling stop at a downtown intersection.

The 24-year-old strong safety smelled of alcohol, had red and watery eyes and registered 0.08 percent when his breath was tested, the police affidavit said. That's the minimum blood-alcohol reading for intoxication under Tennessee law.

NBA changing beer sales policies in wake of brawl

The Associated Press

DENVER — Three months after the biggest brawl in NBA history, the basketball league Thursday told its teams to limit the sale of beer and warn fans against wearing clothes with obscene messages.

Fans who violate the regulations can be ejected.

The NBA is also advising teams on how many security officers to hire, where they should work and what tactics they should use.

"We look at this as an opportunity to remind people that coming to an arena is an opportunity to share an experience of rooting a home team on to victory and booing the opposition, but not doing it in an anti-social way that goes against our civil society," NBA Commissioner David Stern told The Denver Post.

The regulations are meant to prevent a repeat of the brawl during a Detroit Pistons-Indiana Pacers game in November, when players went into the stands after a fan threw a full cup of beer at the Pacers' Ron Artest.

The new rules ban the sale of alcohol after the fourth quarter begins, limit drinks to 24 ounces each, and restrict fans to who drinks each. Designated driver programs are also required at each arena.

An NBA Fan Code of Conduct, to be posted in all arenas, bars in-

Briefs

decent messages on signs or clothing and reminds players to "respect and appreciate each and every fan."

Stern said many teams already meet the new standards.

Five Pacers players and seven fans were charged in the Nov. 19 melee at the Palace of Auburn Hills, Mich. The league suspended Artest for the rest of the season, and other players were given suspensions of up to 10 games.

Lakers and Rambis, Shaw

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Former players Kurt Rambis and Brian Shaw were hired by the Los Angeles Lakers on Thursday as assistants to coach Frank Hamblen for the rest of the season.

Hamblen was an assistant before taking over as head coach this month after Ray McConchy stepped down because of health concerns.

Rambis and Shaw join Larry Smith, Mike West, Markin Smith and Chris Bodaken as assistants under Hamblen.

In addition to having played for the Lakers, Rambis and Shaw have worked for the team in other capacities. Rambis as vice president of business and basketball integration, and Shaw as assistant director of scouting.

Pistons have Iverson, head to break on a high

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The All-Star break is arriving at a bad time for the Detroit Pistons. They would much rather keep playing.

We're playing some of our best basketball of the season," said Chauncey Billups, who scored 20 points along with Richard Hamilton, leading the Pistons past the Philadelphia 76ers 93-75 on Wednesday night.

The Pistons won their fourth straight game and their ninth in the past 10.

"We're playing for each other, like we did last season when we won the championship."

Detroit has a better record than the break this season (32-19) than last (33-21).

Billups was 7-for-8 from the field, including 5-for-6 from three-point range. Hamilton was 8-for-16 from the field, and the Pistons made half of their shots, also going 9-for-17 from the three-point line. The Pistons also outboarded the Sixers 49-42.

"We moved the ball well tonight and got guys open looks," Hamilton said. "We were more crisp on offense than we have been in a while. It kind of reminds me a little of how we were when we played like this last season."

Meanwhile, Detroit held the league's leading scorer, Allen Iverson, to 23 points. Iverson, who scored a career-high 30 points, most in the NBA this season, on Sat-

urday and then had 38 in his next game, was just 8-for-21 against Detroit's tight defense.

Iverson also committed six turnovers. "We just tried to guard him with our whole team," Pistons coach Larry Brown said.

"You can learn a lot playing against them," Iverson said. "They're a championship. They play team basketball."

Tayshaun Prince had 15 points and eight rebounds for the Pistons, and Ben Wallace contributed 10 points. Rasheed Wallace added 13 points and 15 rebounds, and Antonio McDyess had 10 points and nine rebounds.

The Pistons jumped to a 25-8 lead in the first quarter and led 48-35 at halftime. The Sixers cut it to 63-56 with 2:47 remaining in the third quarter on a jump shot by Corliss Williamson. But the Pistons pulled away thanks to some clutch shooting.

"We're getting better," Brown said. "All the players are getting better, and that's the key."

Williamson had 14 points, Andre Igouda had 11 points and eight rebounds and Kenny Thomas contributed 10 points and 11 rebounds for Philadelphia. The 76ers, who shot just 39 percent from the field, had their three-game winning streak snapped.

"We played a poor basketball game against a very good basketball team, and that's a bad combination," Sixers coach Jim O'Brien said. "We never made a run."



Pistons Ben Wallace, right, and Tayshaun Prince surround 76ers guard Allen Iverson in the first half. Iverson was held to 23 points in the Detroit's 93-75 victory.

NBA scoreboards

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	26	21	.558	1
Philadelphia	26	27	.491	6
New Jersey	23	30	.434	9
New York	26	26	.500	1
Toronto	21	32	.396	6
Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	40	14	.741	1
Orlando	22	27	.447	8
Atlanta	28	24	.538	3
Charlotte	22	27	.447	8
Indiana	22	27	.447	8
Cleveland	22	27	.447	8
Chicago	22	27	.447	8
Memphis	22	27	.447	8
Milwaukee	22	27	.447	8

Western Conference

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	41	17	.706	1
Phoenix	38	20	.655	2
Houston	32	26	.554	8
Memphis	31	27	.533	9
New Orleans	11	42	.208	30
Northwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	25	20	.558	1
Minnesota	26	27	.491	2
Portland	22	27	.447	5
Utah	21	32	.396	6
Pacific Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	38	20	.655	1
Sacramento	30	28	.517	8
L.A. Lakers	28	24	.538	3
L.A. Clippers	26	26	.500	4
Golden State	22	27	.447	9

Wednesday's games

Boston 90, Memphis 88	7:00
Cleveland 111, Atlanta 89	7:00
Indiana 95, Denver 88	7:00
Detroit 93, Portland 77	7:00
San Antonio 95, Milwaukee 90	7:00
Miami 113, Clippers 95	7:00
San Antonio 95, Sacramento 85	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00

Thursday's games

Cleveland 101, Detroit 93	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00
San Antonio 95, Milwaukee 90	7:00
Miami 113, Clippers 95	7:00
San Antonio 95, Sacramento 85	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00

Friday's games

Cleveland 101, Detroit 93	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00
San Antonio 95, Milwaukee 90	7:00
Miami 113, Clippers 95	7:00
San Antonio 95, Sacramento 85	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00

Saturday's games

Cleveland 101, Detroit 93	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00
San Antonio 95, Milwaukee 90	7:00
Miami 113, Clippers 95	7:00
San Antonio 95, Sacramento 85	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00

Sunday's games

Cleveland 101, Detroit 93	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00
San Antonio 95, Milwaukee 90	7:00
Miami 113, Clippers 95	7:00
San Antonio 95, Sacramento 85	7:00
Golden State 117, Seattle 110	7:00
Portland 101, New Orleans 100	7:00

BOSTON — Pierce 6-14 17, LaFrentz 4-6

3-13. Blount 3-7 2-4, Payton 5-12 3-4, Allen 4-5 1-10, Curry 5-14 12-25, Miller 11-20 8-0, Welch 1-1 1-3, Perkins 1-3 2-4, O'Neal 4-11 1-10, Dwyer 1-1 1-3, LaFrentz 1-1 1-3. Total 101-42. Totals 29-55 28-58.

Memphis — 28 20 23 15-30

Three-Point Goals—Memphis 5 (Miller 3, LaFrentz 1, Jones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Bulls 121, Raptors 115

CHICAGO — Deng 5-10 15-20, Harrison 5-8 1-11, Curry 6-15 7-15, Miller 11-20 8-0, Dunbar 6-10 1-2, Chandler 1-1 0-0, Gordon 7-13 2-2 1-7, Nicholson 2-2 0-0, O'Neal 4-6 1-0, Piatkowski 0-0 0-0, Griffin 0-0 0-0, LaFrentz 1-1 1-3. Total 101-42. Totals 29-55 28-58.

Toronto — Rose 8-15 2-5, Bosh 8-12

1-1, Anakin 1-0 0-0, Peterson 6-7 6-6, Aiston 2-2 0-1, Marshall 0-0 0-0, E. Williams 1-0 0-0, Gorton 1-2 1-3, Total 101-42. Totals 29-55 28-58.

Chicago — 34 24 25 15-30

Three-Point Goals—Chicago 11 (Dwyer 6, Blount 4, Gordon 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381

Jackson, Carson compare problems for AA coaches

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

Every now and then, a player comes along who boosts his team's level of play and for whom opponents don't have an answer.

Kubasaki boys basketball coach Chris Sullivan thinks his team, the Okinawa Archipelago, Kadena might have that type of player—Kadena in 6-foot-4 junior Zaire Jackson, Kubasaki in senior point guard Marcus Carson.

Sullivan has seen a great many teams and players in his tenure as coach of Nile C. Kinnick in Japan in the late 1990s and now with Kubasaki, and "not in a long time," he has seen that type of player in a Far East High School Boys Class AA Basketball Tournament.

What sets Carson and Jackson apart?

"They both play at the next level," Sullivan said.

Aside from averaging 30-plus points and 20-plus rebounds a game for the Panthers, "Jackson just plays like a manchild underneath," Sullivan said. "He's a much more unstoppable anywhere from 10 feet in, from the foul line in. If he gets the ball in the paint, watch out. Probably count your losses."

Carson, averaging 22 points, nine assists and four steals for the Dragons, "makes all his teammates look better on the floor," Sullivan said. "He sets up everybody and he sees things so well. When he's not out there, we're seriously missing an important ingredient in our game."

"They've also elevated their teams back to respectability. Kubasaki, which slumped to 9-17 last season after finishing second



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Kadena Panthers junior forward Zaire Jackson is averaging better than 30 points and 20 rebounds a game this season.

in Class AA in 2003, entered its Friday game at Kadena at 13-4. Kadena is 12-7 after going 15-12 and also not placing in the Far East Tournament last season.

With those two weapons at the ready, Sullivan thinks the Dragons or Panthers, maybe both, stand a good chance to compete for the tournament title. The teams have met in the title game three times, the last in 1995, with the Panthers winning all three.

"I hate to put myself on a limb, but either one of us will be in the championship game," he said. "Overall, we're both a top four

Far East Boys Class AA Basketball Tournament

Dates: Feb. 21-26, 2005

Host: Kadena High School, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa.
Sites: Foster Field House, Camp Foster, and Kadena High School, "Panther Pit," Kadena Air Base, Okinawa.

Participating teams: Seoul American (defending champion, titles in 1995, 2002 and 2004); Morrison Christian Academy Mustangs, Taichung, Taiwan (first last year, title in 1999 and 2002 at Class A Tournament); Kadena, Pantera, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa; Benet, D. Edgren Eagles, Misawa Air Base, Japan; Father Business Memorial Friars, Manilla, Guam; Yokota Panthers, Yokota Air Base, Japan; Nile C. Kinnick Red Devils, Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan; King Kong International Dragons, Hong Kong, China; Kubasaki Dragons, Camp Foster, Okinawa; Christian Academy in Japan Knights, Tokyo; Zama American Trojans, Camp Zama, Japan; Simon Sanchez Sharks, Yigo, Guam; St. Mary's International, Tokyo; American School in Japan Mustangs, Tokyo; Guam Panthers, Nimitz Hill, Guam; John F. Kennedy Islanders, Upper Turnon, Guam.

Returning All-Far East players: First team, Travis Ekmann, Nile C. Kinnick, Jun Dambara, St. Mary's International; Ronnie Stephens, Kubasaki. Honorable mention, Jay Higgins, Seoul American; Leonard Lynch, Nile C. Kinnick; Will Badillo, Zama American; Anthony Gattin, Seoul American.

Format: Single round-robin, 16 teams split into four pools of four teams each, first two, Modified double elimination playoffs with consolation, last four.

Schedule: Opening ceremony, 8:30 a.m. Monday. Round-robin play starts 9 a.m. Monday. All games but consolation semifinals and placement games are at Foster Field House, Okinawa. Semifinals, consolation and placement games at 2 and 11 a.m. Saturday. All consolation games at 2 p.m. Skills competitions, four-shoot-out, three-point shootout, all at 11 a.m. Tuesday. Closing ceremony, 5 p.m. Saturday.

five team. I guarantee one of us, Kadena or Kubasaki, will be there, maybe both."

To engage in that all-home-team showdown, Kadena and Kubasaki face battles with several tough squads that plan to vie for the honor.

Seoul American, the two-time defending champion, doesn't have a big star at it did with past



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Kubasaki Dragons senior guard Marcus Carson is averaging 22 points, nine assists and four steals a game heading into weekend play.

MVPs Nino Etienne and Jake Abramowitz, but the Falcons are, perhaps, the tallest team in the tournament, with four starters 6-4 or taller.

Junior guards Jay Higgins and Jamaal Mohn and what coach Steve Boyd calls the "G-men," 6-5 junior Mike Goodman and 6-6 sophomore Anthony Gattin, have paced the Falcons, who've played 41 games entering this weekend's Korean-American Interscholastic Activities Conference tournament.

His highest-scoring starter is averaging 12.3 points per game, his lowest 10.4. "I've never had the balance that I have this year," he said.

Then there's Nile C. Kinnick, with one loss against high school competition in Japan and bent on topping its runner-up finish of last year. Seniors Leonard Lynce and Paul Ergue lead a squad whose big question is whether jun-

ior all-around Travis Ekmann can return from a broken finger.

And Yokota, with just two losses overall and having been the only team to beat Kinnick, waits in the wings in case one of those four falters. Not overly tall, the Panthers play tenacious defense and get at-times-explosive scoring from senior Cameron Cooper.

"That's the great unknown," Sullivan said. "We don't play each other, we don't see Seoul, we haven't seen Kinnick or Yokota. I don't know but on paper what the matchups are. But that's what makes the tournament exciting, those great unknowns." Still, riding the shoulders of Carson and Jackson, it could end up being an all-Okinawa final, "if all the variables come together," Sullivan said. "That's basketball. Our chances are really good that we're going to finish very high this year."

E-mail Dave Ornauer at: ornauid@starsandstripes.com

Richardson scores 30 as Warriors stun first-place Sonics

The Associated Press

First-place teams usually don't look forward to the All-Star break. The Seattle SuperSonics certainly weren't complaining about having a few days off after their second straight home loss.

Jason Richardson scored 30 points and Derek Fisher had 21, including five three-pointers, in Golden State's surprising 117-110 victory at Seattle.

Dale Davis had a season-high 16 points and 10 rebounds off the bench for Golden State, which ended a three-game losing streak.

Speedy Claxton added 27 points for the Warriors.

Seattle was led by its two All-Stars, Ray Allen and Rashard Lewis, with 26 and 17 points, respectively. But Allen had only four points in the second half on 2-for-8 shooting.

The Warriors scored 37 points in the third period to turn the game.

"You can't give up 37 points in a quarter," Sonics coach Nate Mc-



Roundup

Millan said. "Defensively, you're not out there."

The Sonics still finished with a 10½-game lead in the Northwest Division at the All-Star break at 35-16.

The Warriors are 15-38, including losing streaks of nine, six and six games. And with one big victory before the break.

Heat 113, Clippers 95: Shaquille O'Neal was hardly needed as the Heat won their seventh straight game and sent the Clippers to a seventh consecutive loss — all part of Los Angeles' nine-game road trip, the longest in the league this season.

Damon Jones had a career-high 31 points (8-for-10 from three-point range) and Dwyane Wade added 28 points and 12 assists. O'Neal had 14 points and eight rebounds.

Nets 96, Kings 85: Jason Kidd had his 64th career triple-double and Vince Carter scored 21 points for the Nets.

Carter reached 20 points for the 11th straight game and the 77th time in the past 18. Kidd finished with 19 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his third triple-double in the last six games.

Rookie Nenad Krstic scored a career-best 18 points.

Mike Bibby had 25 points to lead the Kings, who lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Cavaliers 111, Hawks 89: LeBron James scored 28 points, fellow All-Star Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 18 points and 13 rebounds and the Cavaliers reached 30 victories before the All-Star break for just the fourth time. The last time Cleveland won 30 before the All-Star break was 1992-93, when the Cavs reached the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Bulls 121, Raptors 115: Kirk Hinrich had 28 points, Ben Gordon scored 15 in the fourth quar-

ter and the visiting Bulls reached a season high for points.

Eddy Curry added 24 points and Luol Deng had 20 for the Bulls, who have won three straight and 16 of 21.

Chris Bosh had 28 points for the Raptors, who have lost five of six.

Celtics 90, Grizzlies 88: At Boston, Ricky Davis hit a 12-foot jump shot with 3.8 seconds remaining for the Celtics, who have won six of eight.

Mike Miller made a three-point shot with 9.8 seconds left to tie it at 88 for the Grizzlies before Davis hit an open jumper. Miller's three-point attempt fell short at the buzzer.

Pacers 95, Trail Blazers 87: At Indianapolis, Reggie Miller scored 27 of his season-high 36 points in the second half. Jeff Foster had 14 points and 17 rebounds, and Fred Jones added 14 points for the Pacers.

Joel Przybilla finished with 18 points and 17 rebounds for the Trail Blazers.

Bobcats 94, Nuggets 88: Kareem Rush scored 14 of his 20 points in the third quarter and the host Bobcats snapped a seven-game losing streak. Keith Bogans added 18 points.

Denver was led by Carmelo Anthony's 21 points.

Spurs 101, Hornets 78: Tim Duncan scored 19 points and the Spurs pulled away in the fourth quarter at New Orleans, where they have never lost.

Rookie J.R. Smith led New Orleans with a career-high 25 points.

Knicks 108, Bucks 90: At New York, Jamal Crawford scored 23 points to lead six Knicks in double figures. The Knicks won for just the fifth time in 24 games and had their first double-digit victory margin since Dec. 29 against Minnesota.

Toni Kukoc had 20 points and Desmond Mason 18 for Milwaukee, which was without leading scorer Michael Redd (sprained index finger) for the third straight game.

Big Unit joins new teammates for training

Johnson arrives in Fla.; Cubs adjust to camp without veteran Sosa

By RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Randy Johnson could get a side job as the world's tallest comedian.

He got lost Wednesday on the way to Legends Field, introduced himself to a group of his new New York Yankees teammates

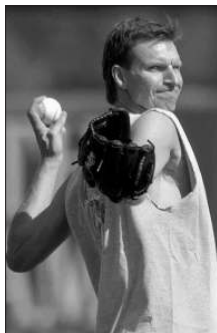
once he got there, and then held a news conference and cracked one-liners with the ease of a Henny Youngman. His opinion on steroids?

"I definitely know nutrition is a big part of staying healthy and being successful but, obviously, it's something that I guess kind of goes beyond the normal things at GNC."

His thoughts on former Arizona teammate Curt Schilling, who could pitch against him when the Yankees play Boston in the season opener on April 3?

"I'm glad to see that I'm quickening up his rehab program because I see that he's pretty excited about Opening Day. I'm pretty excited about that root canal I've got next week, too."

The Yankees and Red Sox tried not to react to Trot Nixon's criticism of Alex Rodriguez a day earlier. In other Boston news, closer Keith Foulke said he tried to get the



New York Yankees pitcher Randy Johnson plays catch following his arrival at training camp, Wednesday in Tampa, Fla.

ball from the final out of the World Series, the one Doug Mientkiewicz kept.

Across Florida and Arizona, pitchers and catchers on seven teams reported for spring training, a day after the Yankees, Washington Nationals and Cincinnati Reds

opened up. Eleven more clubs begin Thursday, with the remaining nine scheduled to start by Sunday.

For the Chicago Cubs, it's their first spring training camp without Sammy Sosa since he was acquired from the White Sox in March 1992. The All-Star right fielder, whose relationship with the team deteriorated last year, was dealt to Baltimore on Feb. 2.

"He did a lot of things for this organization for baseball and for the city," Cubs pitcher Mark Prior said in Mesa, Ariz. "But in general, I think probably now we're better off."

Down in Fort Myers, Foulke talked about asking for the famous World Series ball, the one he flipped to Mientkiewicz at St. Louis last Oct. 27, sealing the first title for the Red Sox since 1918.

"I'd have definitely liked to have it back," Foulke said. "When we got back to Boston, I asked him about it and I didn't get it. So that's the end of that."

He doesn't regret that he didn't run over and step on the bag himself.

"It's not my job to run the ball to first base," Foulke said. "My job is to throw it over there and let him do his job. We got him out. That's all that matters."

Foulke didn't want to talk about the remarks by Nixon, who praised A-Rod's playing ability but said: "He can't stand up to [Derek] Jeter in my book or Bernie Williams or [Jorge] Posada."

"I'm not getting into a war of words with them," Jeter said. "That's between Trot and Alex. You ask Trot what he meant."

In Viera, 69-year-old Frank Robinson walked up the dugout steps and announced

he had passed his physical.

"It only took six, seven hours," the Washington Nationals manager said jokingly.

Robinson expected to manage only a year when in 2002 baseball asked him to leave his job in the league office and lead the Montreal Expos. After three years in Canada, Robinson moved with the team to Washington.

"I'm kind of surprised that I'm still here because I didn't know if I was going to be healthy enough to do it," Robinson said. "Or if I wanted to do it, if I wanted to go through the grind, the travel and all that stuff, the sitting on the bench for hours on end and being at the ballpark at 12 o'clock in the afternoon for a night game."

In Tucson, Ariz., the White Sox began with 22 players who weren't on the 40-man roster when the team started spring training a year ago. Among the newcomers are starting pitchers Freddy Garcia, Orlando Hernandez and Dustin Hermanson, along with catchers Ben Davis and A.J. Pierzynski, Carlos Lee and Magglio Ordonez have departed.

"There is a little more excitement around here," center fielder Aaron Rowand said. "It is a different feeling than having a group of guys on the team that is going in a different direction."

Among the first to arrive at Arizona's camp in Tucson was third baseman Troy Glaus, who left Anaheim to sign a \$45 million, four-year contract with the Diamondbacks. The 2002 World Series MVP said his surgically repaired right shoulder has healed and no longer impairs his throwing.

"Opening Day was tomorrow, I could play," Glaus said.

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La Russa: Canseco said he used 'helper'; Baseball looks into FBI claim of warning

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Canseco bragged about not having to work out as hard as other players on the Oakland Athletics because he had a "helper," his former manager, Tony La Russa, said in an interview with "60 Minutes" Wednesday.

La Russa managed Canseco and the Athletics to consecutive AL pennants from 1988-90, winning the World Series in 1989. La Russa's interview was broadcast Wednesday night on CBS, three days after the network aired an interview with Canseco, who has admitted using performance-enhancing drugs and accused several former teammates of the same.

Sandy Alderson, executive vice president for baseball operations in the commissioner's office, said Major League Baseball has no record of being contacted during the mid-1990s by an FBI agent who told the New York Daily News he warned baseball about steroid use among players.

La Russa, now manager of the St. Louis Cardinals, told "60 Minutes" Wednesday that "Canseco would boast about not needing a lot of time in the gym to build his strength."

"He would laugh about the time that other guys were spending there, and how he didn't have



Tony La Russa

to, because he was, he was doing the other 'helper'." La Russa said. "He was having help in a different way. You know, the easy way."

Earlier this week, the Daily News reported that baseball executives failed to act on information provided by Special Agent Greg Stejskal in Ann Arbor, Mich. He said he told baseball security chief Kevin Hallinan in the mid-1990s that Canseco and other players were using illegal anabolic steroids.

"Kevin has told me that he does not remember any conversation with Special Agent Stejskal," Alderson said. "However, because of the nature of the assertions made by Stejskal, we have reviewed our records to determine what, if any, contact there may have been between Stejskal and our office."

"[Jose] would laugh about the time that other guys were spending there, and how he didn't have to, because he was, he was doing the other 'helper'. He was having help in a different way. You know, the easy way."

Tony LaRussa

Former Oakland A's manager on Jose Canseco

Alderson said baseball has no record of any contact with Stejskal during the period, adding: "Nor has the FBI provided us with any such documentation."

Alderson said Stejskal left a message on Hallinan's voice mail Tuesday. Alderson said the message states that the '90s contact to which Stejskal has referred occurred at an FBI conference in Quantico, Va., where Hallinan was speaking.

"Hallinan does not recall the scenario described by Stejskal," Alderson said in a statement. "Had Hallinan been more formally contacted, or had he received a follow-up call from Stejskal, he would have pursued whatever information was available."

Alderson said baseball's phone records do reflect a call on June 19, 2002, from a Greg Stejskal,

who identified himself as an FBI employee in the Detroit office. Alderson said Hallinan was out of town when the call came and directed Marty Maguire, a member of baseball's security department, to return the call.

"Stejskal referred Maguire to an informant, whom Maguire contacted," Alderson said. "The informant provided very dated information linking only one player, Jose Canseco, to steroid use."

At the time that this information was obtained, Canseco was no longer an active professional baseball player.

On May 18, 2002, Sports Illustrated released a report in which former NL MVP Ken Caminiti alleged many players used steroids. That June 7, The Wall Street Journal reported that Canseco, who was circulating a book proposal, had told publishing houses that he took steroids.

Free chicken as Illinois cruises

By DAN GELSTON

The Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — The rally tones were on every seat and a local restaurant promised free chicken wings for every fan if Penn State could pull off an upset of top-ranked Illinois.

By the end, those towels may as well have been white flags, and no one was eating any better than a concession stand hot dog.

Roger Powell Jr. went 10-for-10 from the field and scored 21 points and Dee Brown added 19 points to lead No. 1 Illinois to its 26th straight victory, 83-63 over Penn State on Wednesday night.

Illinois (26-0, 12-0 Big Ten) topped the school record of 25 consecutive victories set over three seasons from February 1914 to February 1916.

"Streaks aren't important," Illinois coach Bruce Weber said. "Winning the Big Ten, getting the high seed, advancing March into April is what's important. But at the same time, you've got to feel proud about what you've accomplished."

Penn State (7-17, 1-10) was just another easy victim, falling to 0-10 against top-ranked teams.

Gary Claxton led the Nittany Lions with 19 points, the only player with 17 double figures.

Illinois was the first top-ranked team to play at the 9-year-old Bryce Jordan Center and the first to visit State College since Indiana in 1993. In that one, coach Bob Knight and the Hoosiers



Illinois' James Augustine beats Penn State's Ben Luber to a loose ball during the top-ranked Fighting Illini's 83-63 win over the Nittany Lions.

needed two overtimes to escape with a 88-84 victory.

Twelve years later, there was no such excitement for the home crowd.

Illinois was simply too quick, too talented and too deep to let a team like Penn State even come close — no matter how hard the Nittany Lions tried to prepare in practice.

"For me, it's like going to my first hockey game. I never appreciated the speed of the puck until I saw hockey in person for the first time," Penn State coach Ed DeChellis said. "I can kind of equate it with what we saw tonight. They were very, very fast and we can't simulate in practice what we saw tonight."

The Illini scored the first seven

points, then Brown had two straight steals, turning one into a fast-break layup and another into a mid-air assist for Luther Head, and the blowout was on. Deon Williams and Brown hit consecutive three-pointers for a 38-19 lead and the Illini cruised to a 52-30 halftime advantage.

"I think we broke their spirit down the stretch in the first half," Weber said.

Powell made all eight of his shots in the first half, when Brown had 10 of his 11 assists.

"We could have played harder and come out with more intensity on defense," Claxton said.

Powell shook off a four-game slump (8-for-21 shooting) and matched his season high for points.

"It was good to make some baskets, but the guards set me up," Powell said.

Head finished with 16 points and Illinois was 12-for-28 on three-pointers while extending its road winning streak to 13 games, best in the nation.

"They're so unselfish. That's how basketball should look," Penn State guard Mike Walker said.

Illinois would have it no other way. In the first half, the Illini had 19 assists on 22 baskets and finished with 27 assists overall on 34 baskets.

"We moved the ball, we pushed it," Weber said. "Our guys came to play."

Virginia's slower pace can't stop Carolina

The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Rashad McCants shrugged off his recent poor shooting, only 20 percent on three-pointers over the previous five games. After all, North Carolina won four of those games, right?

"I really wasn't doing anything worrying about me," McCants said. "I was actually thinking about the team."

McCants had 23 points and Sean May added 17 points and 16 rebounds, helping the fourth-ranked Tar Heels pull out an 85-61 victory over Virginia on Wednesday night.

Jawad Williams and Raymond Felton each scored 12 points for the Tar Heels (21-3, 9-2 ACC), who met within one-half game of first-place Wake Forest in the Atlantic Coast Conference. McCants had a season-high six assists as North Carolina won for seventh time in eight games.

"I was happy to see Rashad make a bunch of shots," North Carolina coach Roy Williams said. "I never had confidence in him for one second."

With both teams celebrating "Throwback Night" — they donned retro uniforms based on 1940s designs — the Cavaliers (13-10, 4-8) might have taken it a bit too literally. They continued their slowdown tactics started earlier this month by coach Pete



Gillen, holding the ball on nearly every possession while the shot clock wound down.

It was a bit reminiscent of the 1982 ACC championship game, when the Tar Heels beat the Cavaliers 47-45 after stalling for the final 7½ minutes. That game — with players such as Michael Jordan, James Worthy and Ralph Sampson on the court — is generally credited with forcing the eventual implementation of the shot clock.

The slower style certainly has worked for Gillen, who led Virginia out of the conference cellar with three straight victories. "It's the first time we've lost in four games, so you can't argue with it," said Virginia guard Gary Forbes, who had 23 points on 8-for-11 shooting.

Still, it ultimately failed even though the Cavaliers started much closer than in the earlier matchup this season, a 110-76 Carolina blowout.

No. 6 Boston College 74, Rutgers 64: Sean Marshall scored 22 points and Jared Dudley had 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Eagles (21-1, 10-1 Big East), who were playing for the first time since losing at Notre Dame on Feb. 8.

Ricky Shields scored 16 points for the visiting Scarlet Knights (8-14, 2-10).

No. 11 Michigan St. 81, Minnesota 62: Shannon Brown had 18 points and Maurice Ager added 16 for the Spartans (18-4, 9-2 Big Ten), who have won 15 of 17, the last four by double figures. Vincent Grier had 19 points for the visiting Golden Gophers (16-9, 6-6).

No. 16 Alabama 72, Arkansas 63: Chuck Davis scored 16 of his 21 points in the second half and the Crimson Tide (20-4, 9-2 Southeastern Conference) won 20 for the second straight season.

Jonathan Modica scored 16 points for the visiting Razorbacks (17-8, 5-7), who had a three-game winning streak snapped.

No. 19 Pacific 79, UC Santa Barbara 56: Guillaume Yango scored 16 points and the Tigers (21-2, 15-0) clinched the Big West regular-season title with their 17th straight victory overall and 28th in a row in conference play.

Joe See and Alex Harris each scored 16 points for the Gauchos (8-14, 5-8).

No. 20 Wisconsin 76, Michigan 50: Mike Wilkinson had 22 points and nine rebounds for the Badgers (17-6, 8-4 Big Ten), who swept Michigan for the first time since 1979.

Courtney Sims scored 16 points for the visiting Wolverines (12-14,

3-9), who matched a school record with their ninth straight loss. The last time Michigan lost nine in a row was the final eight games in 1966-67 and the opener the following season.

No. 21 Oklahoma 83, Nebraska 60: Terrell Everett scored 18 points for the Sooners (18-6, 7-4 Big 12), who snapped a three-game losing streak. Oklahoma had lost four of five after a 10-game winning streak.

Joe McCray had 21 points for Nebraska (11-14, 4-7), which has lost seven straight to Oklahoma.

No. 23 Charlotte 66, DePaul 62: Curtis Withers scored 18 points for the 49ers (18-4, 9-2 Conference USA), who won at home in their first game in six years as a ranked team.

Drake Dienert tied a school record with seven three-pointers and had 25 points for the Blue Demons (16-6, 8-3). His last three tied it 62-62 with 56 seconds left, but Brendan Flavin had three throws in the final half-minute to clinch it.

No. 24 Cincinnati 83, Southern Mississippi 51: Jason Maxwell scored 20 points and Eric Hicks had 18 points and 12 rebounds for the host Bearcats (19-6, 7-4 Conference USA), who had a 44-19 rebound advantage. Rashad Carruth scored 16 points for Southern Miss (10-14, 1-11), which has lost six in a row for the second time this season.

N.C. State rolls over Maryland

By AARON BEARD

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — North Carolina State's fleeting hopes of reaching the NCAA tournament have come down to a handful of games.

Iliian Evtimov and Tony Bethel each scored 17 points Wednesday night to lift the Wolfpack to an 82-63 victory over No. 22 Maryland, earning its first regular-season sweep in the series since the 1988-89 season.

Julius Hodge added 13 points and nine assists for the Wolfpack (15-10, 5-7 Atlantic Coast Conference), who led by 20 in the first half and held on for their first home victory over Maryland in five years.

It was a desperately needed victory for the Wolfpack, who opened 10-1, then lost nine of 12 to jeopardize a bid for a fourth straight NCAA tournament bid.

N.C. State was coming off a 53-51 victory at Georgia Tech, last year's national runner-up. The Wolfpack played three of their final four games at home — though two are against No. 4 North Carolina and No. 5 Wake Forest — and the chance to correct a season game away.

"We're very confident," Evtimov said. "We also know that we don't have any room for error right now. If we want to have a postseason — anything — we've got to play hard and we've got to try to win every game we can. We've lost any kind of margin for error we've ever had."

N.C. State knows it will need more efforts like the one against the Terrapins (15-8, 6-6), who were coming off an overtime victory over No. 7 Duke.

N.C. State unleashed on offense, choosing crisp passing over 1-on-1 basketball to get open shots. The Wolfpack hit 13 three-pointers — many coming on kickouts from the post or off penetration — and finished with 22 assists on 25 field goals.

Wade Hodge went 19-for-21 at the free-throw line, where the team has shot just 69 percent this season.

We played well offensively, moved the ball well and we were hitting on all cylinders," N.C. State coach Herb Secord said.

Maryland coach Gary Williams was displeased with his team, which had beaten the Blue Devils 99-92 in overtime over the weekend to earn its first sweep of Duke in a decade.

"I guess we were feeling pretty good about ourselves," Williams said. "I guess they made us pay for it. ... You have to use the (Duke win) as a springboard to the next game."

Nik Caner-Medley scored 17 of his 19 points in the first half to lead the Terps, but got little help and didn't hit a field goal after halftime.

Maryland led 20-19 after a three-pointer by Caner-Medley, but the Wolfpack answered with a 25-4 run to take control.

Next: A tidy solution to a messy situation

TEXT, FROM BACK PAGE

ment players who will skate under a salary cap system that lowers total player payrolls from a current 76 percent of league revenues to something closer to 50 percent.

If that course is taken, this season's lockout likely would turn into next season's strike while the NHL tries to reopen with replacement players.

"We will continue to explore and pursue all available options in order to achieve a successful resolution," Bettman said. "Virtually immediately, we as an organization at the league level and our clubs are going to begin planning for a 2005-2006 season. ... We will obviously pursue a collective bargaining agreement with the players' association. That remains our goal. But obviously ... we will explore all of our options, and we haven't done this to date."

The union could go to court or the U.S. National Labor Relations Board to challenge the impasse, although the NLRB would have no power over the NHL's five Canadian teams. If the challenge is successful, the union could prevent the league from resuming play, possibly forcing Bettman back to the bargaining table and dragging the dispute deep into next season.

Another possibility is that the union dissolves, a process known as "decertification," and players then bring an antitrust action against the owners for collusion. The NHL Players' Association successfully decertified against the NFL back in 1989, forcing the league back to the bargaining table for a deal that the union deemed favorable.

And a further scenario has the players, or a media mogul such as Rupert Murdoch, starting a hockey league to replace the NHL. By next summer, 80 percent of the players' individual contracts binding them to their teams, and to the current labor negotiations — will have expired, allowing those players to join another hockey league or form their own. Murdoch successfully created a rugby league in England last year, and he has ambitions for his global media empire, which includes satellite television, Fox Sports, 20th Century Fox movie studios and more.

"That's the area where the uncharted water goes in both directions," said J.P. Barry, the Calgary-based managing director of IMG hockey, with 70 NHL players under contract, including Daniel Alfredsson, Jaromir Jagr and Mats Sundin. "Let's say Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates all of a sudden start a league and promise players contracts and conditions better than the uncertainty that they have now. These are just possibilities, but you never know."

Certainly nothing that happened over the past several days suggests any solution will be easily attained. Both sides had made major concessions in face-to-face meetings starting in Washington on Sunday, moving to a Sheraton hotel at Niagara Falls, N.Y., on Monday and concluding with a series of faxed letters between their respective headquarters in New York and Toronto on Tuesday night.

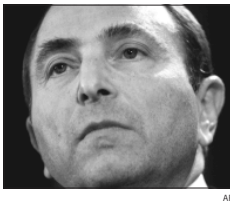
After opposing any salary control system for months, the players on Sunday signaled that they might accept a cap, which they set at \$52 million per team in a meeting with the league in Niagara Falls. Bettman countered with a \$42.5 million offer Tuesday night, and the union responded a few hours later with \$49 million. The owners in turn dropped their insistence that overall player salaries and benefits not exceed a certain percentage of league-wide revenue.

Though the sides appeared only \$6.5 million apart on a salary cap, that number multiplied across 30 teams is nearly \$200 million, which Bettman said would have continued to cause the league to lose money.

He said even a \$42.5 million, NHL owners collectively probably would have lost money for at least two more years, although some stability may have been achieved beyond that.

The judgment we made was we would take the economic risk of agreeing to a fixed cap unrelated to revenues. But there was only so much of that risk that we were prepared to absorb," Bettman said. "And the higher the number gets, the bigger the risk gets. ... We couldn't be in the 50s or the high 40s."

Goodenow said the players compromised on a number of fronts, including a 24 percent



NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said the league "will explore all of our options."

across-the-board rollback on all existing player contracts that would have saved owners \$500 million over two years and \$1 billion in the long run.

"We have said before that they do not want to earn a dollar more than they are worth," Goodenow said Wednesday. "The players wanted to reach a fair agreement, but they never had a negotiating partner."

This is the third work stoppage for the NHL, which postponed 30 games because of a 10-day strike in 1992. Owners locked out the players over labor differences for 103 days in 1994-95, which cut the regular season from 84 games to 48. The league was able to bounce back but still mount a credible Stanley Cup race, but the loss of a season could be far worse for the already-hobbled NHL, which has been struggling against a minuscule television audience in the United States and growing fan apathy.

That returns to the original question: What's next?

"The game is a mess right now," Washington Capitals forward Jeff Halpern said.

And while both sides dig in for another standoff, a third party can do nothing but watch. "The fans are still left holding their hands in the air, wondering what's next," said Doug Siler, a Buffalo, N.Y., based fan who has organized a campaign to express the fan's frustration during the lockout. "Both players and owners have been preparing for this lockout for years. ... I think they will play hockey next year, but with some major changes. I think a lot of players will break with the union and play the league next year. The owners are going to bust the union. The players are in a no-win situation. The owners have to take drastic measures with 20 of the teams losing money."

Lemieux: Star says small cities need a better deal

LEMIEUX, FROM BACK PAGE

canceled the 2004-05 season Wednesday there would be a last-minute agreement to save the season — and, in his mind, the sport.

"This morning, I thought the two sides would get together before the press conference and make a deal ... that, at the end of the day, there would be too much at stake for both sides to agree to save Wednesday." But I knew and understood throughout this process that it would be a long battle."

Lemieux is the first owner-player in modern American pro sports history, but there never was a chance he would side with the players despite being the NHL's best-known star.

"A few years ago, I thought the owners were making a lot of money and were hiding some under the table," he said. "But then I got on this side and saw the losses this league was accumulating."

Lemieux tried several weeks ago to secretly move along a deal, meeting in Toronto with Maple Leafs owner Larry Tanenbaum and player Tie Domi to try to bring the owners and players to the league and its players' union. He was unsuccessful.

"It's been difficult," Lemieux said. "I don't want to say the wrong things on either side and that's why I've chosen to stay away from the negotiations."

Lemieux said the NHL will be damaged by shutting down for a full season, but is confident it will make a strong return with rules changes designed to make the sport more fan-friendly and entertaining — something he has sought for years.

"The game is going to suffer for a couple of years and it's going to take time to win back our fans and rebuild the business," he said. "And the players are going to have to share in that."

The labor impasse couldn't come at a more critical time for the Penguins, two-time Stanley Cup champions. They've had considerable on-ice and box office success from 1991 to 2001 until soaring salary costs forced Lemieux to get rid of all but one of the team's stars except himself.

"I couldn't afford myself," he said, referring to the below-market \$5 million salary he paid himself for seven seasons.

With attendance down during three consecutive losing seasons amid the sell-off of players such as star center Alexei Kovalev, Lemieux said the 38-year-old franchise's existence depends on a more favorable labor contract and a new arena.

As for the season, Lemieux plans to keep playing once the NHL returns to the ice, despite missing 145 games due to injury or rest in the past three seasons.

"I've done it before, taken a few years off, but it gets tougher and tougher, once you get closer to 40, it's a lot harder to do," he said. "I turn 40 in October." But I'll prepare myself this summer to come back and play."

Quick fix? How about a 20-game season?

BY ASHLEY MCGEACHY

The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — Here's a suggestion for Gary Bettman, Bob Goodenow and the rest of the National Hockey League: Play a 20-game season.

This year. Next year. Every year.

On Wednesday, the NHL canceled its season, a sad, inevitable end after 154 days of a lockout based on — what else — the almighty dollar. Instead of compromising on a salary cap, hockey owners forfeited an incalculable amount of money, financially crippling the league, the teams and the players as well as local businesses and their workers.

Concessionaires, sporting goods merchants, bars, restaurants and vendors, whose livelihoods revolve around hockey, may have been devastated.

When Bettman and Goodenow reopened their negotiations and talk about next season, they should immediately agree to trim the 82-game play by 62. Start training camp the day after the Super

Commentary

Bowl, when a void the side of California hits sports fans. Have it last a week. Then

bring on the game.

Fans are angry, but as baseball's brood taught us after the strike of 1994, most are fickle as long as there's a hook. For America's pastime, the hook is the compelling, if not suspicious (wink, wink, Jose Canseco), home run derby in 1998 between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa. Fans watched the gripping contest as Roger Maris' record and in the process rediscovered their love of baseball and subsequently returned to the ballpark for good. Hockey needs a hook.

Think of the ramifications of a shortened season. Every game would have major consequences — it does in the NFL, doesn't it? — and therefore generate a high-octane, off-type atmosphere every night. Fans would pack the arenas (cha-ching) to see vicious checks and masterful goaltending and

frenetic offense, and the teams that really were dedicated to winning would be compelled to stack their rosters with the best players available.

The Washington Capitals and Florida Panthers and Pittsburgh Penguins can't afford to pay big bucks to be competitive? Fine. Their fans wouldn't have to suffer through 82 games of heartbreak.

And the NHL wouldn't be over quicker. Aside from a small group of hard-core hockey fans and the sportswriters assigned to cover the league, who in the United States really care about hockey in November and December? Or, to be fair, about the NBA?

The end of the year is about football, football and more football. High schools are playing for state titles, the college season is wrapping up, with teams vying for conference championships and players making cases for the Heisman Trophy. And the NFL season is in full bloom, with teams challenging for playoff seedings.

Did anyone in Philadelphia really miss the Flyers while the Eagles were pushing toward the

Super Bowl? Maybe a few people did, but not me.

On Monday, after getting home from Jacksonville, Fla., I would have watched a little hockey. Not before.

There are things more entertaining, the NHL should do away with annoying ties. A tie does nothing for the fans but leave them with an unsatisfying victory victory.

Instead of allowing a game to end in a tie, have a maximum of two 15-minute overtime periods. If the score is still tied, move to a sudden-death shootout. One shot for victory. That would be must-see TV.

While they're at it, Bettman and Goodenow should consider other changes. Widen the rink. Expand the goal. Severely punish fighting. Play four-on-four.

Do anything you can to promote offense, because while there are purists who appreciate a defensive battle, the casual fan loves scoring. After Wednesday's announcement, the NHL will have to recruit fans back to the game, and that will probably mean attracting new fans.

SPORTS



Gear up for the Nextel Cup campaign with our season preview, Timeout magazine

What's next?



Penguins owner/player Mario Lemieux believes the NHL's future in Pittsburgh relies on a labor agreement that provides cost certainty.

Lemieux has rare view of impasse

BY ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — There never was any doubt where hockey's biggest name stood in the NHL lockout.

These days, Mario Lemieux is the Pittsburgh Penguins' owner first and a player second, not the other way around. Lemieux was captain of Team Canada when it won the World Cup in September but has said repeatedly the NHL has no choice but to negotiate a more favorable labor contract — even if such a deal might trim his own salary.

The only other option, he said, is to risk losing hockey in Pittsburgh and other smaller cities, where fans are weary of subsidizing big salaries in what is becoming a niche sport largely ignored by the masses.

That's why Lemieux was hopeful until minutes before Commissioner Gary Bettman

SEE LEMIEUX ON PAGE 39

Detroit's Joe Louis Arena will not host NHL games this season after the only cancellation of an entire season in North American pro sports history.

Possibilities abound amid intensifying turmoil

BY THOMAS HEATH AND
TARIK EL-BASHIR
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — When National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman formally canceled the 2004-05 season on Wednesday, the league became the first major professional sport in North America to lose an entire season over labor problems, driving speculation on where the 88-year-old NHL goes from here and whether it can even survive.

The flurry of meetings and phone calls over the past few weeks between the union and NHL owners failed to stop the downward spiral that began with

■ **NHL needs to get creative to lure back fans, Page 39**

Possible scenarios

■ The NHL declares an impasse and resumes play next season with replacement players who operate under an owner-specified salary cap. This would likely prompt the players to strike.

■ The players' union goes to court or the U.S. National Labor Relations Board to challenge the impasse, even though the NLRB has no jurisdiction over the NHL's five Canadian teams. Under a successful challenge, the union could prevent the league from resuming play, possibly forcing more negotiations and lengthening the dispute.

■ The union dissolves and players bring an anti-trust action against the owners for collusion, a tactic NFL players successfully used in 1969.

■ The players or a media mogul start a league to replace the NHL.

By The Washington Post

the owners' lockout of players five months ago, which had wiped out \$30 of the 1,230 regular-season games. Now the game heads into uncharted territory.

"I know of nothing analogous to this ... one of the big, professional major sports losing an entire season," said Stan Kasten, former president of the NHL Atlanta Thrashers. "One thing I know is that there will be grave consequences that are long-lasting. It's inevitable."

The league shut down Sept. 15, when the NHL's 30 owners, tired

of what they said was intolerable financial losses, locked the doors to arenas and practice facilities until the players agreed to a cost structure that would rein in salaries. Now that it appears those doors won't reopen any sooner than the fall, the question becomes, "What's next?"

"There are all kinds of scenarios people are talking about, but they involve such drastic steps that it's hard to predict whether they will actually take them," said Gary Roberts, a former anti-trust attorney for the NFL who now teaches law at Tulane University.

Many predict that the league will make the next move by declaring an impasse and resuming play next season with replace-

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**Pistons slow
surging Iverson in
thorough victory
at Philadelphia;
Warriors topple
first-place Sonics**

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tourney begins** Page 36



**Another
demonstrative
victory for
No. 1 Illinois;
N.C. State
routs Maryland**

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Waltrip, Stewart win Daytona qualifying races Page 33

